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# A Doctor's Confession

BY  
WILLIAM HINSHAW, M. D.

DR. W. V. GRIMES

DR. W. V. GRIMES

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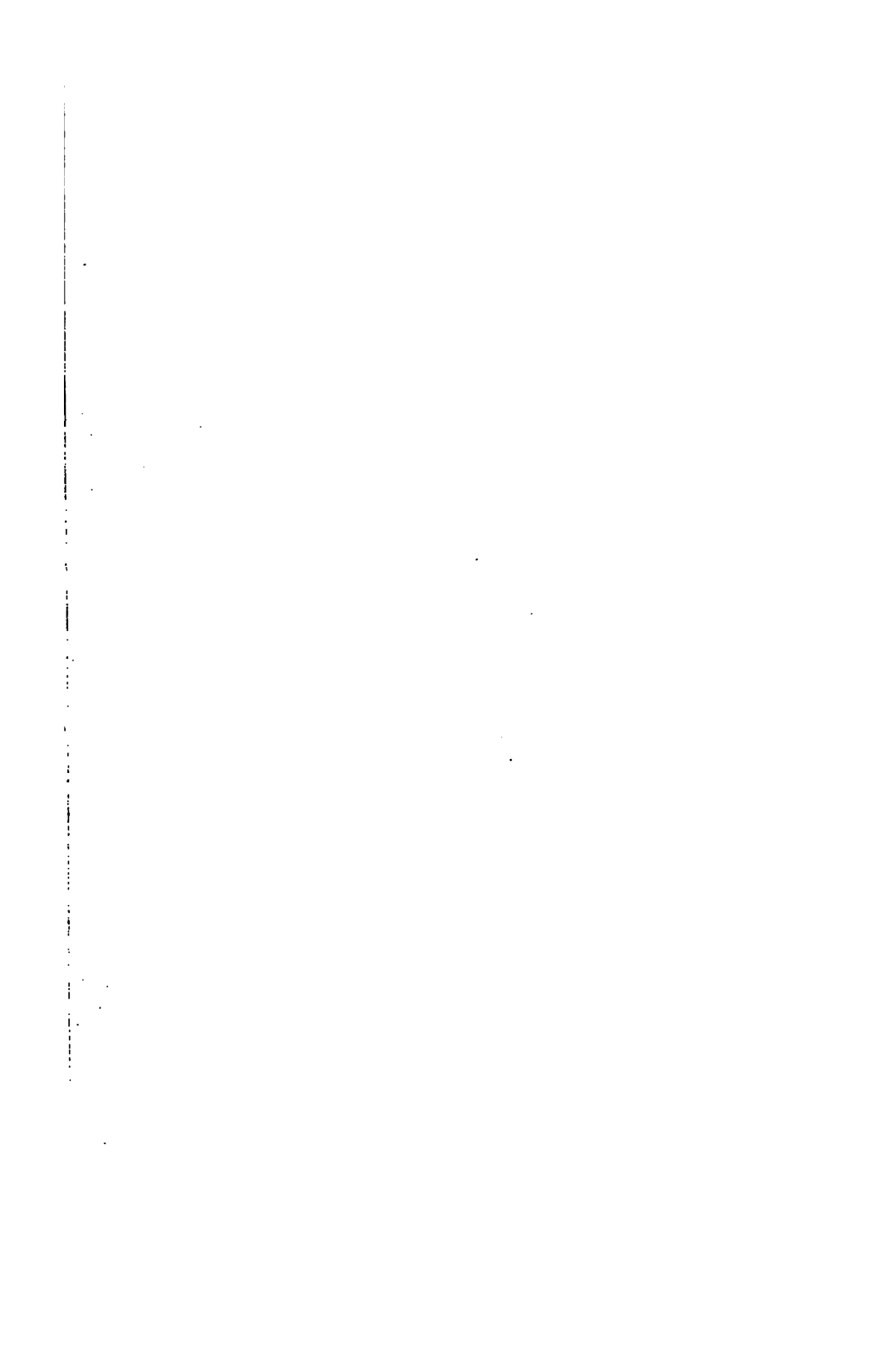




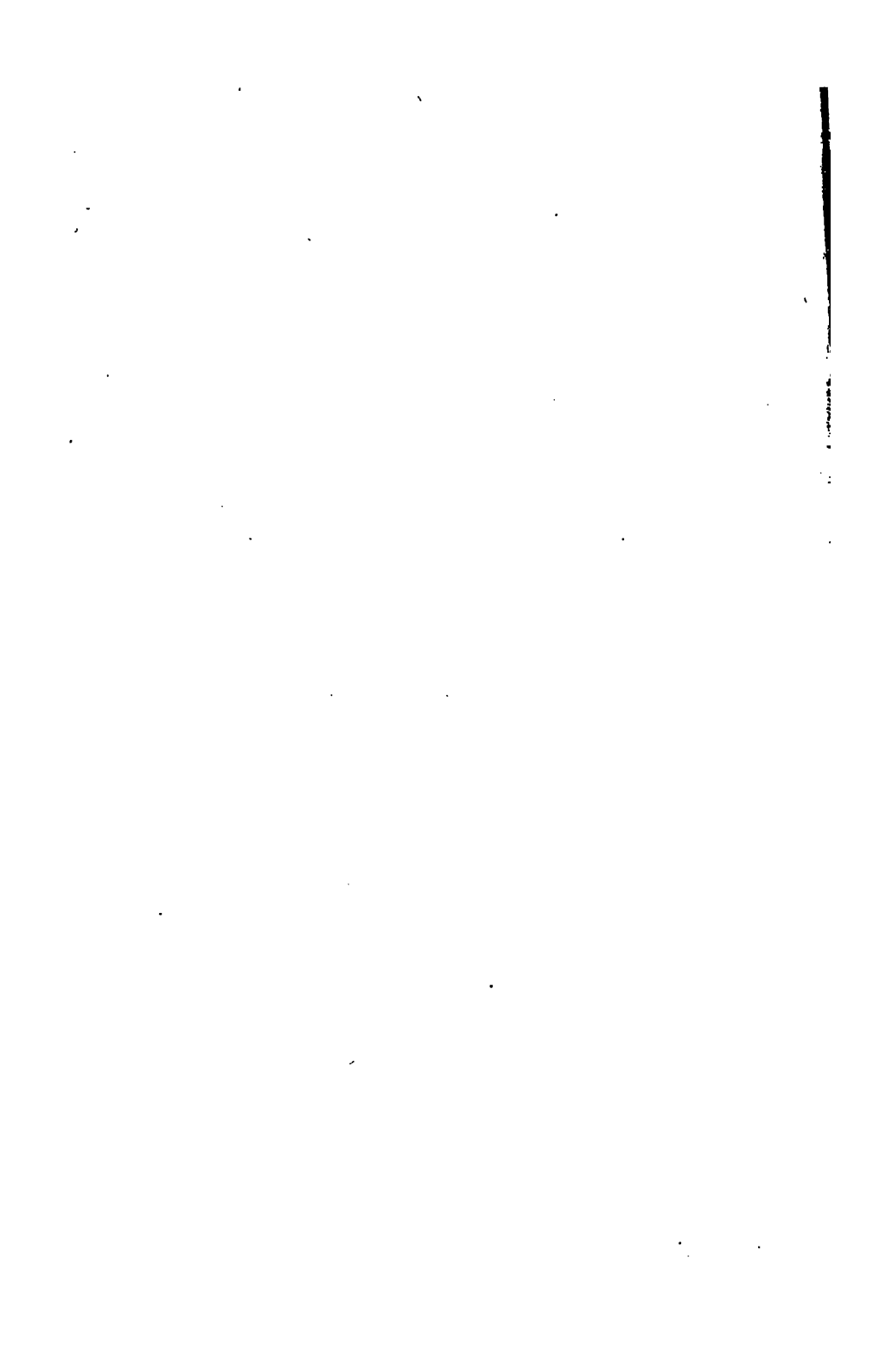
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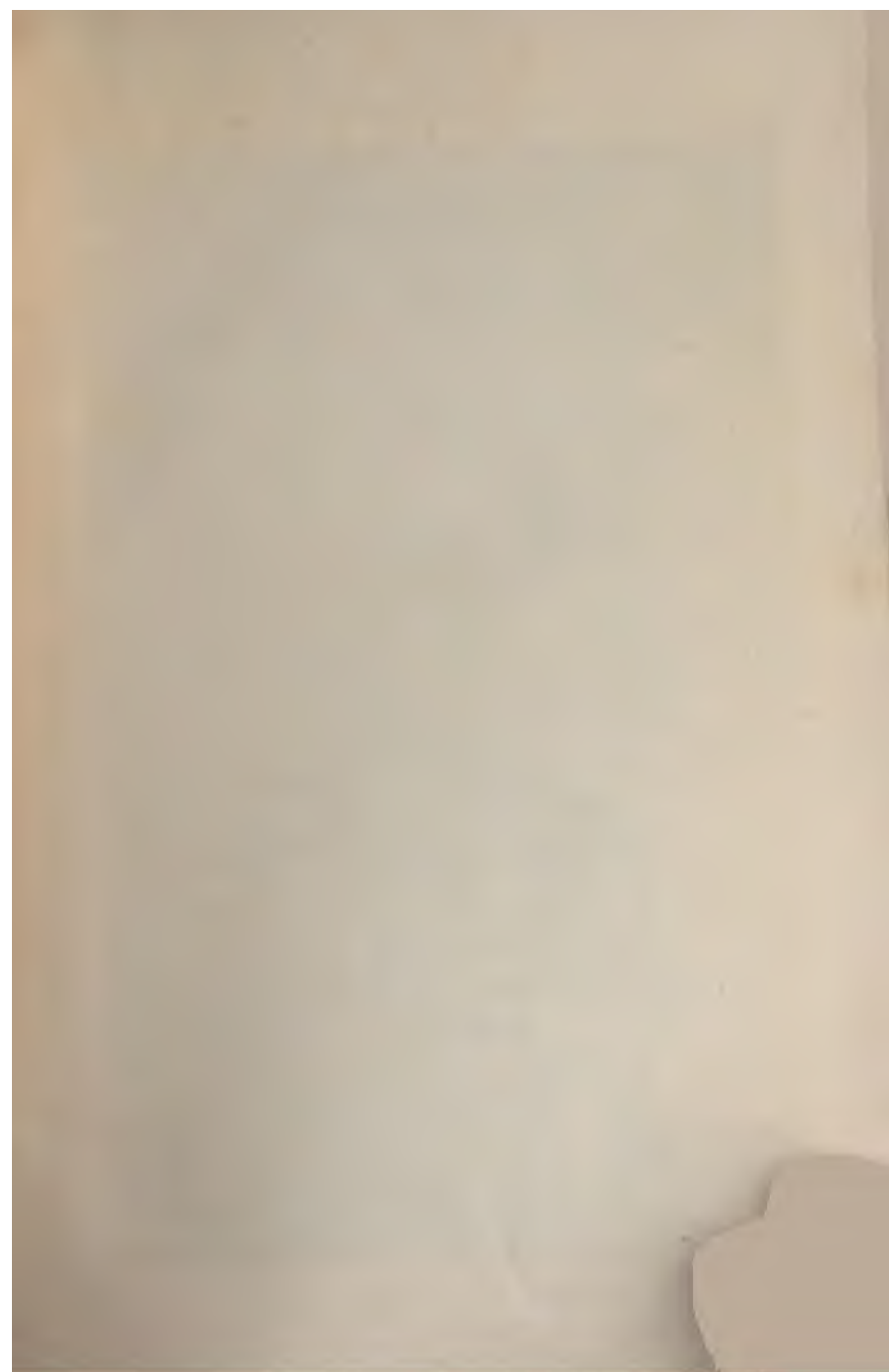


*A Doctor's Confession*



1871

1872





"SOME TRUST IN CHARIOTS AND SOME IN HORSES."—See Page 332.

A  
DOCTOR'S CONFESSION

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By WILLIAM HINSHAW, M. D.

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ILLUSTRATED

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1903

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL PRO-  
FESSION WHO ARE WILLING TO STAND  
OR FALL ON THEIR MERITS, THIS WORK  
IS SINCERELY DEDICATED. : : : ;

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## Preface

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It has been the author's intention to present facts and relate incidents with a view to promoting a better understanding between the physician and the laity, as well as to furnish entertainment and amusement for the general reader. A greater degree of justice would obtain if the people had a more accurate knowledge of what may reasonably be expected of the physician. It should be understood that there are some things about human ailments and their cure that the medical profession know, and some things they do not know; but the training of the masses has been such as to make it detrimental to a physician's reputation and business if he acknowledge ignorance concerning a case he may have under his care. This puts the honest, though well qualified physician, at a disadvantage and encourages deception. Advice is sometimes worth more than medicine, and very often is all that is necessary.

The wonderful advancement that has been made in medical science during the last two decades should be seconded by increased enlightenment of the laity in their relations to the medical profession.





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## CHAPTER ONE.

### WAITING FOR THE TRAIN.

The floor of the depot and the platform around it were covered with lunch baskets, croquet sets, ropes for swings, hammocks and other paraphernalia calculated to add to the enjoyment of a day's outing in the woods.

If there ever is a time when people are inclined to invoke the favor of nature it is when they are going to a picnic; and this morning their invocations surely were answered. The friendliness of the elements was vouchsafed in a clear sky and bracing atmosphere. A gentle breeze from the northwest whispered: "Pleasant weather in Schuylkill wood to-day."

A liberal attendance was assured long before train time. People always forget that special trains never start on time, and their early arrival at the station indicates that they even fear a premature departure; and the result is a long and impatient waiting. Every trunk, box and truck on the platform was utilized as a temporary resting place. A long line of men and women were standing or squatting with their backs against the depot building, while the entire edge of the platform was fringed with human beings of all ages and sexes. It was as promiscuous a crowd as a local community could furnish. Besides the small boy and girl, who are always on hand and imagine that picnics are made especially for them, there was the anxious mother who had to go along to see that her boy did not endanger his life by climbing trees or venturing too close to the edge of the water; and the father had wisely concluded that it would do him good to break the monotony of his life with a day free from the turmoil of business; and the young lady who



feels half the time at home like a bird in a cage, and that the exhilarating atmosphere of the rural districts expands the soul as well as the lungs, remembered that romances often originate at picnics. She doted on romances, and a romance with a sylvan flavor was exceedingly attractive to her. And there was the young man who thought one game of corquet in the forest was worth a dozen in the backyard of the most popular family in Jamburg; nor was the "auntie" going to be left at home when there was an opportunity to indulge in experiences that would call up pleasant reminiscences of the days when she was full of vivacity and hopes; and to complete the variety, her counterpart, that specimen of humanity who is conspicuous for his neglect of a duty he owes to the race, was well represented.

It seemed a long time to wait for the train, but there was no occasion for an astute observer of human nature, or the student of character to become impatient. He could interest and amuse himself by noticing the pranks of the children, and the actions and expressions of the older ones as they contemplated the day before them. A casual inspection of the various costumes might occupy a portion of his time and thoughts. While some of the women had on handsome and comfortable, yet cheap and washable gowns, others looked as if they were going to an evening party. The broadcloth Prince Albert coat, high standing paper collar, and polished tile mingled with the cool linen sack, negligee shirt and straw hat. However well some were satisfied with their own dress, they were not pleased with the make-up of others, for numerous criticisms were heard.

A freckle-faced woman sitting on a baggage truck, swinging her feet six inches from the floor, on noticing a stylish looking lady step from a carriage on to the platform, remarked, "The idea of wearing a black silk dress to a picnic in the woods."

"Yes, but just look at that white French pique gown," said a lady on her left.

"Yes, I noticed it," added the woman with the freckled face, "I don't suppose that goods cost less than fifty cents a yard."

"And then it's awful hard to wash and do up," was suggested by a third woman standing nearby with ears on the conversation and eyes on the restless crowd.

"Shoot the hat," yelled a boy perched on a pile of trunks, as a young lady from the rural districts, wearing a straw head dress with a brim six inches wide, and a broad red ribbon streaming out two feet behind, hurried from a lumber wagon to the depot as if she scarcely had time to get her ticket.

"Why, Freddie!" exclaimed the boy's mother, in suppressed yet inflexible tones, "where did you learn such manners?"

Freddie slid down the opposite side of the trunks and ran away just as his mother reached out her hand to take hold of him. The mother walked away with an expression of chagrin and humiliation and sat down on a pile of croquet boxes.

"I'm sorry for that woman," said a lady standing in a group on the end of the platform.

"I presume I feel about as bad as she does, for that boy is in my Sunday School class," remarked the woman in white pique.

"I didn't know that Fred Instep ever went to Sunday School," quietly remarked another woman.

As Fred jumped off the end of the platform his attention was attracted by a somewhat fleshy woman carrying one child and leading another, while a third trotted behind, moving in the direction of the depot as rapidly as her burdens would permit. The train had not yet arrived, but this woman knew it was about due, and she was in that condition of mind so many get into when they find they have not made the right calculations as to the time it takes them to get ready to start for a train — a train that runs on its



own time and nobody's else. Her motions indicated a determination not to get left. The child she was leading, in its forced march, stumbled and fell to the ground. "Come here, kid, and I'll help you up," exclaimed Fred at the top of his voice.

After being dragged a rod or so the little fellow regained his feet and the fleshy woman was soon at the wicket calling, between breaths, for "A ticket and a half to the picnic!" Rivers of perspiration ran down her red, congested face, and her white sleeves were pasted like court plaster to her plump arms. She was not immediately waited on and became impatient. Had the train already arrived and the conductor called out, "All aboard," she could not have been more restless. Robert Holmes, the ticket seller, who was serving apprenticeship with the railroad and telegraph companies, was engaged in conversation with a girl whom he had called to the outside window; but a violent rapping on the wicket sill with a fat fist and an impetuous call for "tickets!" attracted his attention. The woman purchased her tickets and, passing to the outside, confronted the girl who had delayed the transaction, with a fierce expression and said, "Girls are getting a little too smart now-a-days; they're never satisfied unless they have some boy or other to gas with, even if they have to interfere with other people's business."

"I beg your pardon," said the girl, whose name was Gertrude Stover, "I'm very sorry if I have caused you any annoyance or inconvenience. I only stepped to the window at the request of Mr. Holmes, who wished to speak to me, not intending to detain him from his duties."

The sweet tone of Gertrude's voice and the kindly expression of her face alone were not only ample apology for the alleged transgression, but punishment to the one who prompted them. The woman felt that she, herself, was the real transgressor.

Some boys playing with a baggage truck gave it a sudden

jerk, displacing a pile of trunks that lay on it; the motion caused a boy that was sitting on the topmost trunk to lose his balance and fall. Those who were on the scene were shocked at the sight of a boy starting to fall backwards from a height of six feet to a hard floor and sure to light on his head. Who has not experienced the terrible sensation of sudden impending danger? The spectators thought of a broken neck, a fractured skull — a dead boy! Were the bystanders paralyzed at the scene? Not all of them; Gertrude Stover, standing ten feet away, sprang forward like a flash and caught the boy just before he struck the floor, evidently saving him from serious injury if not death. A feeling of relief pervaded the crowd, and Gertrude heard many expressions of praise for her presence of mind and almost superhuman strength and agility.

A whistle was heard and, "The train is coming," issued from many throats. There was the customary hurry and bustle of a large excursion party boarding a railway train. This was a special train of six coaches sent from Lebanon to carry this crowd of picnics to their destination thirty miles away.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE PICNIC.

The trip was made without incident of note, and five hundred human beings with cheerful faces and light hearts were landed at ten o'clock on the banks of a river celebrated for its scenery. How fortunate when one sets apart a time for social enjoyment and recreation, if he be able to free his mind from everything that would interfere with that object. Home duties should be left at home, nor should business cares be carried into the precincts of pleasure.

So long as pleasures walk hand in hand with virtue and reason they refine and strengthen. If we would be pleased we must please. There is a pleasure in pleasing, and when we make a business of pleasure we must not be occupied with other business.

The picnic grounds were a quarter of a mile from the railroad, but their superiority as a place for open air recreation was ample compensation for the walk, which extended from the track across an open plain to a regularly formed ridge about fifteen feet high. It was a beautiful ridge, matted with bluegrass, and dotted here and there with trees of various kinds. On reaching its summit the spot where this expectant party was to spend the day in search of rest and recreation, burst into view. Nature made this prospect, but no landscape artist could improve it. Taste could add nothing to its beauty, imagination could not surpass the grandeur, calculation could not make the scene more alluring to the eye. At the foot of the ridge ran a beautiful narrow stream called Pebble Creek. It evidently derived its name from the abundance and variety of pebbles that lined its bed.



The crowd, with one impulse, halted on the ridge to view the landscape before it. When Albert Bruce arrived he exclaimed, "Behold the Promised Land!—beyond the Jordan," pointing to the little creek below them. This promised land consisted of three terraces containing about two acres each rising one above the other from the left bank of the Schuylkill. The course of the river at this point is directly southward, running at right angles with the ridge mentioned above.

The ground was covered with bluegrass and studded with forest trees of every species known to that part of the country. The view was unmarred by undergrowth; only a clump of blackhaw bushes, a gooseberry shrub and a humble sumac stood here and there looking up with reverence to the tall poplars, majestic oaks and stately elms that lifted their immense branches heavenward. At the upper end of the park was a large, round, white granite rock, all covered with woodbine excepting the top which protruded through the foliage in a way that suggested a shaven scalp. This peculiar appearance induced some one to call it the "monk," which name was adopted by the whole party.

The grounds were bounded on the north by a serrated bluff forty feet high, the notches, four in number, dipping half-way to its base. Viewed from the south, the points between these notches resembled immense hay stacks. One of them, however, presented a decidedly picturesque appearance. It required no tax of the imagination to see in it the image of a lion's head. The short, thick shrubbery that covered the top and sides of the mound represented the shaggy mane, a bush on either side near the top served as ears, and nature had caused two dark colored rocks to protrude through the grass that answered very well for the eyes; and to complete the picture, a rounded projection of naked earth made a very respectable nose. Then how natural it was to call this picturesque spot Lion Park!

Between two of these mounds issued a stream of spark-

ling water. The swiftness of the brook above caused the water, on reaching the precipice at the edge of the bluff, to dash several feet through the air; dropping six feet, it struck a boulder and glanced off in a thin sheet, forming a hemisphere as it curved downward. There was a constant pouch of clear water three feet in diameter; pretty at all times, but its surpassing beauty and splendor could be realized only when the sun's rays converted it into a prism showing a dazzling, sparkling, ever changing rainbow. As the water quitted this unique form it was gathered into a narrow channel below and went dancing over the little boulders on its way to the thirsty Schuylkill.

This bluff, extending the whole length of the park, was not quite perpendicular, but just slanting enough for grass to grow thick on its side. On the east the park merged into a landscape furnishing no special pleasure to the eye. Shapeless ridges, thinly clad knobs and crags rose one above another till the view was lost in the horizon.

Between these and the beautiful ridge on the south a deep ravine furnished a passage into the park for Pebble Creek.

With the exception of a number of impatient boys who went over with a running jump, the party crossed Pebble Creek on an extemporized "foot-log" and was soon located in squads all over the park.

While some were prospecting for suitable places to hang swings, others were surveying croquet grounds and tennis courts. The women lost no time in beginning to invoice the contents of their lunch baskets to ascertain how many dishes were broken, cakes crushed and jelly cups upset in the rush and confusion attending the trip in the over-crowded cars.

Mrs. Crane discovered that the cork had come out of a bottle of creamed coffee, her napkins were soaked and a dish of fried chicken was swimming in the fluid.

"Your grief is small compared with mine," exclaimed her



neighbor, Mrs. Rand, holding up a cake in her hand, "here's my beautiful cocoanut cake all saturated with vinegar."

"That's nothing" said Judge Kern, who was watching his wife examine her basket on the terrace a couple of rods above, "my wife has two broken teacups, and her deviled eggs have managed to get into her raspberry jam."

A childish, half angry, half playful scream was heard down toward the river. It came from Fred. A party of two couples, including Elijah Swan, an eccentric old bachelor, had just finished the erection of arches for a game of croquet on a level plat of ground on the lower terrace. Some little children were rolling and turning baby summer-saults down the side of the terrace. If there is anything the small boy and girl like to do better than wading water and playing on a sand pile, it is to roll down a soft grassy mound. Fred must have envied those children, being too large to indulge in that sort of amusement himself. He caught one of the boys by the feet, and, making a sled of him, dragged him over one of the arches, rendering repairs to the latter necessary before it could be used.

Mr. Swan caught the transgressor, turned him across his knee and gave him a good natured spanking. Fred, on being released, goodnaturedly pulled up one of the other arches, ran off with it and threw it into the river, closely followed by Mr. Swan, who stood with an expression of mild chagrin as he watched the dying ripples where the arch went down. Fred having placed himself at a safe distance, yelled at the top of his voice,

"Lige Swan, if you're a good diver you'll find your croquet arch at the bottom of the river. Go in; swans are fond of the water."

Mr. Swan returned to his companions and began to exercise his inventive faculties to extemporize a plan for replacing the lost arch. "That boy is a candidate for the reform school," he remarked.

"O, well, boys will be boys, you know," said one of the ladies.

Mr. Swan trimmed a branch of a gooseberry bush, but in attempting to bend it into proper shape it broke. He then tried a twig of oak; the result was the same. His countenance portrayed mental perturbation as he glanced at the author of his troubles, who had approached within a few feet to observe the proceedings. Fred stood with a mischievous twinkle of the eye, and an expression of peculiar satisfaction. Mr. Swan caught him, and, standing him in the place of the missing arch, placed his feet about nine inches apart and said, "Now, you little brat, stand right there till this game is finished. You're the only thing in these woods tough enough for a croquet arch." For a little while there was no indication in the boy's actions that the order would not be obeyed. He stood as motionless as a statue, regardless of the jocular remarks that were made about the unique arch; but the boy's mind was not idle. One of the ladies sent a ball between his legs and Swan was about to "make" the same arch when Fred grabbed the ball and said, "I must go to the concert; goodbye, Lige," and ran off to the bluff where a number of people had gathered about "Rainbow Waterfall," and, inspired by the beautiful sight and the grandeur of the surroundings, were singing songs appropriate to the occasion.

Fred threw the ball high up on the bluff, where it lodged, and then yelled, "Say, Mr. Swan, if you're as good a climber as that squirrel I saw a while ago on that big elm, you'll find your ball on top of the mountain," and was soon lost in the crowd around the singers.

The singing was spontaneous — the outburst of soul. It was not a time for pent up melody. There was too much poetry and nature's art in the surroundings for a musical soul to keep silent.

When the first crowd reached this place, their emotions having already been aroused by the objects of grandeur and

beauty, they were enraptured with this sparkling, dancing brook. Mrs. Wells, an emotional, yet appreciative person, began,

"Sweet are the little brooks that run  
O'er pebbles glancing in the sun."

She was joined by the others in the singing. Rev. Mr. Rhodes spoke the following words in a cheerful, but serious tone:

"O Nature, how fair is thy face  
And how light is thy heart and how friendly thy grace!"

Then all, with one impulse sang:

"Come' thou fount of every blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing thy grace."

\* \* \* \*

After a moment's silence, Gertrude Stover enlivened the audience by singing:

"I chatter, chatter as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on forever."

When she was through the admiration of the crowd seemed to be drawn from the beauties of nature to this girl. Most of them knew her. Those who did not inquired about her. No one could hear her voice, or see her face, or look into her eyes without being interested. She was sixteen years old — not "sweet sixteen" — that phrase is too common, too vulgar to be used in describing Gertrude Stover. Her form was a blending of the Grecian and Teutonic types. The firmness of her step indicated strength, yet there was an easy grace in her carriage that was truly admirable. She was at once a child and a woman. While her intellect was remarkable, she was too well balanced to be called precocious. She seemed especially attractive on this day to a few well dressed young men, but Robert Holmes, the telegraph operator, engaged her attention more than any of the others.

I had known her for some time; in fact, we had been



school mates, and I admit that on this occasion I had an increasing desire to cultivate her acquaintance. Perhaps, however, the events of the day that had made her conspicuous and added to her popularity, influenced me in the direction of her society. At all events, I felt a little jealous of Robert Holmes, and resolved to draw Gertrude away from him; but the way did not open up very rapidly for the consummation of my plans. Gertrude was not a very approachable girl. Bob Holmes could dress better, spend more money and had more experience than I had. He belonged to a family of more prominence than I did; and then it was known that Gertrude's parents were opposed to her receiving special attention from the boys. She was a mere girl, and I was only two years her senior. Mr. and Mrs. Stover had conscientious scruples against the too common custom of rushing girls into womanhood prematurely, and their daughter's conduct did not indicate that she opposed them in their views. But I had courage and ambition. My mind was active in devising schemes for stealing myself into her favor and affections. When there was a lull in the extemporaneous exercises, and general conversation had been resumed, I sauntered around to a group in which Gertrude and Robert Holmes were standing, intending to incidentally engage in conversation with the former, and if possible, get her away from him; but before I had spoken a word to her she turned to Robert, and with a graceful bow and pleasing smile, said, "Will you excuse me? Mother wants me to go with her."

She and her mother walked off to another part of the grounds and joined some friends. Of course I was disappointed, but concluded that Gertrude's leaving Robert so suddenly was ample compensation for the disappointment.

About this time Albert Bruce was overcoming an obstacle that had delayed one source of interesting amusement for the youngsters. Efforts had been made to hang a swing on a certain branch of a very large elm tree that stood near

Pebble Creek at the lower end of the park. There was a peculiar attraction about this location for a swing. The tree stood about three rods below a considerable elevation — the end of the lower terrace, where it swelled up to form a high second bank to the river. A large branch of the tree extended out horizontally and parallel with the edge of the terrace. The plan was to hang a swing at a point twenty feet from the body of the tree and forty feet from the ground, attach a line to the seat of the swing and give it momentum by drawing it back over the elevated ground and letting it go. But the question was, how to attach the rope to the desired place. The tree was too large to climb, no ladder was within reach, and all efforts at throwing the rope over the branch had failed when Mr. Bruce appeared on the spot. Miss Orilla Rand, a vivacious young lady, said to him, with an expression of face and motion of the head suited to the words, "Mr. Bruce, we are about to despair; can you give us a word of encouragement?"

"I should be pleased to do so if it lies within my power, Miss Rand. What is the cause of your grief?"

"I knew you would be good," said Miss Rand, "and now, if you will help us out of our difficulty, we will reward you handsomely. Yes, if you will tell us how to hang our swing on the big arm that is extended so willingly," pointing to the desired limb, "we'll give you the first swing and christen it 'The Bruce swing.'"

"Well," said Albert, "I should consider that abundant and liberal compensation. If you will get me a rock about the size of a potato I will attempt to earn the reward."

A boy was immediately despatched for the rock, and Bruce tied it to one end of the line and the rope to the other, and without much difficulty threw the rock over the branch, and drawing the rope over, he tied the two ends together, had men to hold it firm while he climbed hand over hand to the branch, on which he sat while securing the ends of the rope, and then descended in the same manner that he



ascended. He was heartily cheered by the crowd, and at the suggestion of Miss Rand, dedicatory and christening services of a comical and ludicrous character were conducted by Rev. Rhodes and Judge Kern.

This gigantic swing soon became quite popular with the more courageous boys and girls; they liked the long, exciting sweep it gave them. But about this time I was very much interested in another part of the grounds. Having been taught that perseverance was a powerful element of success, I resolved on another effort to secure the company of Miss Stover, so I induced another young man to join me in securing a croquet set, and then it was not long till I had Gertrude for a partner. I now felt that I was one step ahead of Bob Holmes; and as the game went on I kept a lookout to see if he were not watching us with a jealous eye. Why shouldn't he now feel as I did when he was ahead? I was happy, yet uneasy; had what I wanted, but not satisfied. I was desirous of making a good impression; could I do it? Would I be able to put the best foot foremost without stumbling? I had read in a novel how women admired champions and worshipped heroes. Then how important for me to play a successful game. We made a good start and got three points ahead of our competitors, but I made some awkward plays. My mallet would not strike the balls fairly, and the ball would always find an obstacle to throw it out of line. Deer hunters sometimes get the "Buck ague" but I seemed to have the croquet ague. I couldn't hold the mallet steady. We were losing ground, and our opponents enjoyed our ill-luck. I magnified the situation. Even Gertrude's composure, steady aim, graceful movements and cheering words would not quiet my nerves, and when one of my inexcusable blunders spoiled a well laid plan of hers, with a jerk of the head and a mortified but not unkindly look, she stamped her foot; I felt like sinking into the ground. It is unnecessary to say that we were defeated. I was terribly chagrined, but Gertrude's pleasing manner

convinced me that my feelings were exaggerated. It was only a game of croquet. After the game was completed our party started over to the court to witness a game of tennis. On the way we met Miss Rand who said, "Have you seen the big swing down by the river? It's a mammoth affair."

"No," said Miss Carpenter, "but I've heard of it."

"Well," said Miss Rand, "if you want to visit the aerial regions just go down there and try that swing."

"All right," replied Miss Carpenter, "I feel, after our great victory at croquet, that I am entitled to an exalted position."

"Then," said Gertrude, "perhaps the swing would be more interesting than tennis."

"Very well," said Mr. Ramsey, "let's go down there."

"Bruce Swing" had not been misrepresented. Hanging forty feet from its axis its maximum sweep was more than a hundred feet. Only those with strong nerves and courage would allow the operators to give them the "giant swing." In fact the question was raised as to the propriety of subjecting any one to such risk. But the danger was in failing to start both sides even, which would give the swing a wabbling, jerky, unpleasant motion.

"Well, how do you like it?" was asked of a plucky young lady as she dismounted.

"O, it's delightful," she said, "only you feel so funny while you're coming down."

A friend of Gertrude's said, "Gertie, I'm tempted to try that wonderful swing," and, giving her body a twist and dashing her fists out, she added, "What's the harm of being a little reckless when you're out in the wilderness for a good time? If you'll try it, I will."

"And take the giant swing?" said Gertrude.

"Yes, they may send me to the top of the tree, if they can." The bargain was made and they drew cuts to decide which should go first. It fell to Gertrude's lot to take the lead.

Gertrude Stover was not a reckless, venturesome girl,



but she was so full of animation and courage, and possessed so much strength and endurance that only her modesty and common sense prevented her from being bold and daring. She would not be outdone in anything within the bounds of good breeding. After being helped into the seat she was drawn back over the high ground to the limit and went a little farther and higher than any other girl had; but on the second sweep, just as the operators were on the point of dropping the draw-line, Fred ran under it and catching it in his hand gave it a vigorous pull to one side and said, "Let's give her a wobble." His effort was a success. The swing went with a swift, but irregular motion and on its second passage backwards veered to the right sufficiently to catch on the projection snag of a hackberry tree, stopping it so suddenly as to throw Gertrude out of the seat; but she held on to the rope with her right hand, her body dangling in the air fifteen feet from the ground. A shock pervaded the crowd. People were breathless. Some turned away to avoid the awful sight of the girl's dropping to the hard ground. Women screamed, men were paralyzed. The freckle-faced woman yelled, "There, now, I told you somebody would get killed on that swing." Very encouraging words for the girl in the perilous situation. But before any means of rescue could be thought of, Gertrude, with almost superhuman effort, drew herself up and caught the rope which was still fast over the snag. Standing upright in the swing, the plucky girl looked down on the pale, trembling spectators and said in a clear voice, "I'm all right, ladies and gentlemen, don't be alarmed." Her improved situation and words of assurance calmed the crowd and suggestions and advice came from many heads; but the person most concerned, paying no attention to any of them, climbed on to the branch that held the rope and sat down to rest.

Her coolness and self possession allayed the excitement of those below. During the confusion Robert Holmes climbed the hackberry tree and started out on the branch

to assist Gertrude, but she deliberately motioned him back, remarking, "You'd better not come out here, Mr. Holmes, the branch might break with both of us and you get hurt." This concern about others at such a critical moment for herself, was so unexpected that it became humorous and provoked laughter. Gertrude loosened the rope, grasped it with both hands, and, holding it between her feet, climbed down with the ease of a sailor. Everybody rushed forward to congratulate her.

Her mother picked her up as she would a baby and hugged and kissed her as only a loving, thankful mother can.

Some one said, "Where's Fred?"

"Here he is" answered the freckle-faced woman who stood at the edge of the crowd. "Fred Instep, you ought to be skinned alive."

"O, now, don't be foolish," said his mother who stood near by, "Freddie didn't mean to do it."

Gertrude, on hearing harsh criticism of Fred, asked the critics not to be too severe. "The boy," she said, "had no malice in his heart, and then, he has done no particular harm."

This incident was the principal topic of conversation during the remainder of the stay in the woods. Gertrude was liberally praised for her remarkable presence of mind; and her physical strength was a surprise to her most intimate friends.

Those who were admirers of the beauty and symmetry of the female form pronounced Gertrude Stover as nearly perfect in this respect as could be desired. This was easily accounted for by those who knew her parents, for they both were noted for their fine physical development. Evidence of this unusual development was shown by Mrs. Stover in the ease with which she handled her daughter at the time of the swing incident. While general discussion of this subject was going on, I watched closely to see if any word of praise or commendation was expressed for Robert Holmes'



gallant effort to rescue Gertrude from her peril. I hoped that the ridiculous attitude she placed him in by refusing his aid would neutralize his gallantry.

A vigorous whistle of the locomotive announced the hour for the picnicians to return to the city; and in a few minutes beautiful Lion Park, with its attractions and charms, was left in charge of the birds and squirrels.

"People will not learn by experience." This is a trite saying, but sometimes it is so forcibly illustrated that one can not help using it. The broken dishes, rumpled gowns, spoiled victuals and riled tempers as the results of unnecessary hurrying and crowding on the trip out, did not deter this party from repeating their conduct on the return trip. Everybody appeared to get ready to start for the train at the same time, and there seemed to be a universal scramble to reach the foot log over Pebble Creek first. The log was wide enough for the people, with proper care, to cross over two abreast, but on this occasion there was an inclination to double its capacity. Some even tried to pass others while directly over the water. This resulted in several being crowded off. A little girl fell full length into water which was a foot and a half deep. Albert Bruce was standing on the bank attempting to marshall the crowd over in good order, but he jumped in, picked the girl up and carried her to the bank. When the crowd reached the platform they all seemed to want to get into the same car, and the jam reminded one of the scene at a circus ticket wagon when the door is opened. Many expressions of discomfort were heard on account of a hundred people trying to occupy a space only large enough for fifty.

Fred, having reached the train ahead of all the others, was perched on the top of a car enjoying the scene below, when a rather fleshy young woman, with face wet with perspiration and a frown on her brow, exclaimed, "O, don't crowd so, I'm mashed all to pieces!"

"Save the pieces!" cried Fred at the top of his voice.

## CHAPTER III.

### GETTING INSPIRATION.

The next day after the picnic I was sent by my employer to the law office of Connor & Gilpin with some bills for collection. Albert Bruce, who was studying law with this firm, was the only person I found in the office. He invited me to a seat, stating that one of the lawyers would return soon. In a few minutes Mr. Porter came in and informed Mr. Bruce that he had decided to study medicine.

"That surely is a commendable decision," said Mr. Bruce. "It is the proper thing for a young man to determine on some definite purpose in life; and you have chosen an occupation that is, in many respects, very attractive. I debated for some time in my mind the question as to which I would like best, medicine or law, before deciding to engage in the study of the latter. So far as the study alone is concerned, I think, I should enjoy the study of medicine the better, but the practice of law seems more to my taste than the practice of medicine.

"Our tastes then," said Mr. Porter, "are decidedly dissimilar. While I should like very much to spend some time posting up on law, I don't think I would enjoy the practice of that profession."

Mr. Porter, glancing at me in a hesitating manner, as if he would have been pleased to see me retire, went on.

"There certainly is more true dignity in medicine than there is in law, and it is easier for a man to practice the former with a clear conscience and honest heart than the latter."

Mr. Bruce removed his feet from the corner of the table where they had been resting with his legs crossed, and



squared himself around more directly confronting his friend,—there was a flush in his face and a resentful sparkle in his eye — but before venting his indignation he remembered that an indispensable element in the success of a lawyer is self-control; he smiled and said, coolly, “Do you really believe that a successful lawyer is necessarily dishonest and untruthful?”

“Well,” said Mr. Porter, “It seems to be the rule with the legal profession for each one to employ any lawful means to induce the jury or judge to decide a case in his client’s favor.”

“I admit the truth of your statement,” Mr. Bruce said, “But the law doesn’t anticipate deception either on the part of the attorney or witness. Deception and fraud, even in the practice of law, is not lawful.”

“But isn’t it a fact,” said the other, “that each attorney, knowing that his opponent will resort to any kind of misrepresentation that will make a showing in his favor, and on the other hand attempt to suppress any fact that would be against him, so long as he does not render himself amenable to the law, feels compelled to employ the same tactics in order to hold his own? And they often deceive their own client to induce him to get into a law suit when they know it is against his interest to do so.”

“There is too much truth in your assertions, but the employment of tricks and dishonesty by a lawyer is positive evidence either of his lack of ability or a corrupt heart: because, if he is a lawyer in the broader and deeper sense of the term, he could make a creditable success in his business without resorting to dishonesty.

“Now, as to the medical profession, I hope, Richard, that you may be able to pursue your studies, complete your course, and, after a long and successful career as a physician, be in a position to say that you have never practiced fraud or deception with your patients, and that in consultations you have not been guilty of inducing your patrons to

take treatment when you knew it was not necessary."

Mr. Porter looked serious. Albert Bruce and Richard Porter were too good friends to argue a question to the point of hot excitement. Mr. Bruce leaned back in his chair, threw his feet on the corner of the table, and with a complaisant air, added, "I suppose you will study with one of our local physicians?"

"Yes," said Mr. Porter, "I have made arrangements to study with Dr. Powers."

The conversation turned to the picnic at Lion Park. "I understand, Albert," said Mr. Porter, "that you and a certain young lady distinguished yourselves by the performance of athletic feats." Albert ha! ha'd! and said, "Is our fame spreading?"

"Certainly; it is the talk of the town to-day."

"Well," said Albert, "Miss Stover did exhibit wonderful physical strength in saving herself from what might have been a serious accident. And her coolness and presence of mind were remarkable."

Right here I hoped something would be said about the indifferent manner in which she treated Bob Holmes' offer to help her, but I was disappointed.

"She's a well balanced girl, isn't she?" Mr. Porter remarked.

"Yes," said Mr. Bruce, "she balanced herself admirably on that tree yesterday."

"Now, Albert, let's have no levity in connection with a serious matter like that — and a nice, pretty girl," was the good natured rebuke.

"No disrespect whatever was intended," said Mr. Bruce.

"Well," said the other, "laying all jokes aside, Gertrude is a fine girl. Her mind is unusually mature for one of her years. She is very much inclined to the study of nature and the sciences. In conversation with her the other day she said she was trying to learn something about electricity; also that she had been making some experiments in chem-



istry, and that nothing would please her better than to be able to plan for herself the same course that I have decided on. I believe the time is not far distant" — the return of Mr. Gilpin cut the sentence short and I performed my errand and departed; leaving the two young men ignorant of the great interest I had taken in their conversation, especially that part relating to Gertrude Stover.

As I walked down the street my mind was intensely occupied. Intimate friends were passed unnoticed, a message that I was to leave at a certain place was entirely forgotten, and I unconsciously passed the store where I worked. New thoughts and speculations were chasing one another through my brain. I discovered that I, too, had ambitions and aspirations.

I thought much about Gertrude Stover and wondered how much she thought about me,—also what she thought of Bob Holmes. Those complimentary remarks increased my interest in her. I performed my duties about the store that afternoon in a disinterested, absent-minded way. My thoughts were occupied largely in the consideration of some definite purpose in life. I had realized that manual labor was not to my taste. All who ever employed me evidently would agree to this. What profession could I enjoy and follow successfully? Which one would my circumstances permit me to prepare for and follow? Which would yield the greatest reward in the way of wealth, influence and honor?

On my way to supper that evening I was struck with consternation as I passed the railroad station. Through the window of the telegraph office I saw Gertrude Stover sitting at the instrument trying to send a dispatch under the instruction of Bob Holmes. A friend of hers was standing by watching the proceedings. What was the significance of this circumstance? was the question that instantly arose in my mind. Was it on account of any special friendship between Bob and Gertrude? Or, was it only accidental?

I tried to think that if she cared enough for him to seek his company she would not have brought the other girl with her. I connected this affair with Richard Porter's statement that Gertrude was studying electricity and imagined that she was simply observing the effects of this wonderful agent. I had heard it said that girls were artful and crafty and if they desired serious attentions from a young man they would attract him by coyness and reserved manners; therefore I consoled myself with the idea that Gertrude was acting opposite from this plan in making bold to go to Holmes' place of business. Yet I was afraid this theory might be false, and could not suppress a feeling of jealousy, and walked down street with a troubled heart.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A TRICK.

But it was not long till my mind was diverted from the subject. I heard a terrific yelling and screaming. It was about such a noise as a boy makes when he gets into a yellow jackets nest; but it was not that. No yellow jackets nest had been disturbed, but Fred Instep had disturbed his mother's equilibrium and she had him out in the back yard giving him a bit of old-fashioned discipline. When the job was finished and Fred was released he stepped off in a manner indicating that the pain attending the operation was of very temporary duration. It was difficult to tell which the expression on his face resembled most, anger or a mischievous smile.

"I told you I'd whip you if you didn't mind me," said his mother. "Now how do you feel about it?"

"I feel," Fred replied, "proud that I've got a mother that's able to do such a thing."

The unexpected answer struck Mrs. Instep as so ludicrous that she forbore the temptation to punish the boy for his insolence and walked to the house with an unwilling smile on her face.

As I was returning from supper I saw Fred sitting on the ground in the alley at the back of their garden reading a book with a yellow paper cover entitled, "Rattlesnake Tom's Last Victim."

"Hello, Fred!" I said to him, "what are you doing there?" He remained silent a few seconds with eyes on the book, evidently finishing an interesting sentence, and then raised his head deliberately and answered, "Readin' a book."



"What book is it?" I asked.

"O, it's about chasin' a feller round over the mountains out in Idaho that'd killed several men. I tell you it's a dandy story."

"Fred," said I, "as I passed here a little while ago I heard an awful noise that sounded like some one in distress."

"I guess I heard it about as plain as you did. I was closer to it," and he bent his head to one side, raised his chin and laughed in that peculiar way of his. I asked what was the trouble and he said,

"O, nothin' much; Ma told me to chop the wood for Sunday, but some boys come along and I went with 'em down to the creek to go a swimmin' and she was settlin' with me for it, as she calls it. That's what you heard."

"It was a pretty loud settlement," I said.

"O, I yelled," said he, "so Ma'd be afraid the neighbors would hear me and quit."

"Fred," said I, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself; you're too big a boy for your mother to whip."

"O, I do' no," said he, with that mischievous twinkle of the eye so familiar to his acquaintances, "Ma's awful stout — I'll bet she could lick you."

"There's time enough yet," I said, "to chop your Sunday wood."

"Yes, but I have to go out to the pasture for the cow and do some other chores."

"Then why don't you go?"

"Ma thinks I am gone. You see I want to be as long as I can about it, so she'll have to do the milkin' after dark — she allus hates that. That's my plan for gettin' even with her for lickin' me."

"Perhaps she will lick you again for that."

"No, I'll git round that easy enough; I'll tell her that the cow jumped out of the pasture and I had to hunt her up."

As Fred divulged his plan of revenge he peeped through the crack of the fence toward the house to see if his mother

was in a position to see him, suggesting at the same time that I step behind a gooseberry bush, fearing she might see me and thereby discover him.

"Then," said I, "you'll have to break the Sabbath by chopping wood tomorrow, won't you?"

"No, I guess Pa'll chop it this evening. But then," he continued, "there's no more harm in choppin' wood on Sunday than workin' in a harness shop."

"Does your Pa work in the shop on Sunday?"

"Sometimes he does; he made a set of tugs last Sunday — but he'd lick me if he know'd I told it, you bet."

"Your father whips you too, does he?"

"Yes, sometimes, when he gits mad. But then it ain't exactly whippins' he give me; it's more like thumpins'."

"How's that?" I asked.

"Why, he don't wait to find a switch, he just uses his hands and fists and his boots, or anything that's handy."

Fred Instep's father devoted but little of his time and thoughts to the training of his children. He left this to the mother. He only chastised them when he became impatient. And Mrs. Instep's idea of family discipline was to make the children mind. She aimed to keep them under subjection through fear. This was the reason that Fred was so easily tempted to do things contrary to his parents' wishes when there was a prospect of escaping detection. He delighted in "fooling" his "Pa or Ma." He went through his boyhood days with the idea that his parents were selfish enough to make prohibitory rules and enforce them, even by corporal punishment, simply for their own gratification; therefore there was no harm in breaking the rules so long as he was not found out. This principle grew into the belief that his parents were generally wrong and therefore had no special right to his respect.

Very few of Mrs. Instep's acquaintances ever knew her real character. There were two sides to it, a bright one and a dark one. Through her wonderful tact she exhibited



only the bright side to society and the dark side to her family. Popularity was her hobby and she possessed many of the necessary qualifications for riding this hobby. She was pretty and her form was almost faultless. She wore as good clothes as any woman in the town, and exhibited excellent taste in dress; there was a charming power in her voice and she had a conquering smile which she used on occasion. But her voice had two rings to it; one was for society, the other for her family. She could call her children fools and idiots and threaten to whip them till they couldn't stand, in a voice rigid and heavy enough to loosen the plastering on the wall, and then before the echo ceased, receive unexpected callers with a face radiant with amiableness and gentility, and a voice soft and musical. Out in company she was lavish with her smiles, but there was a limitation to them; there never was any left to take home to her husband — where they would do the most good. Always dissatisfied and complaining of her husband's financial circumstances, but never trying to help him better them.

"Then," said I, "Fred, your Pa must give you some pretty hard bruises."

"You bet he does. I'll never forget the thumpin' he give me last summer. I was sore and lame for a week after it."

"How did it happen," I asked. There was a dash of excitement in his hazel eyes as he commenced the following story:

"Why, I'll tell you; my brother Bill was doin' the milkin' one morning; it was in fly time and the flies was awful bad and the cow kept slashin' her tail round and strikin' Bill in the face and eyes and finally she dipped her tail in the pail and throwed some milk in Bill's mouth; that made him mad — I guess he didn't like his milk quite so fresh — and he took and tied her tail to the wagon, and when she found it out she got scared and went to pullin' and run the wagon against the fence and broke two boards, and kept pullin' till



she pulled all the bush part of her tail off and then run down the alley bleedin' like a stuck pig.

"Then Bill seen what he'd done, and he said, 'Confound her fool soul. Dang it, I might ha' known better.' You see he blamed himself some. Bill felt awful bad, for he know'd he'd git a lickin', as big as he was. He told me to follow the cow up and take her to the pasture; and while I was gone I went to work and studied up a scheme that I thought was purty cute, but that's just what got me into trouble. You see I knowed Bill would do anything to git out of the lickin'; so when I come back I said to him, 'Bill, Pa's goin' to give you an awful lickin'. Ma knows about the cow's tail and she says she's goin' to have Pa give you a good one.' Bill didn't say a word, but he looked kind o' scared; but I was just foolin' him, for Ma didn't know a thing about the cow's tail. I let him worry over it a little while, and then says I, 'Bill, do you want me to tell you how you can get out of this scrape?' He said, 'aw, you don't know what you're talikn' about.' 'I don't eh, says, I, 'you jest wait and see.' He studied a while and then said, 'What do you mean?' I seen he was gittin' interested and anxious, and I said, 'You know, Bill, if you have to be licked Pa'll do it, because Ma wouldn't, as big as you are, and now, if you'll give me a half dollar I'll take all the blame about the cow's tail on myself, then if there's any lickin' to be done, why Pa'll have Ma to do it, and I'll work that all right — you jist keep mum. But remember, I must have the pay in advance.' Well, it was a bargain and Bill give me the half dollar."

"You see, what I went into that scheme for was, there was going to be a circus in town in a few days and I wanted to get some money to take me in. I'd rather take a lickin' any day than to miss a circus. I tell you, I felt purty good, for I thought mabe I wasn't so big but what I could git in for a quarter, and then I'd have a quarter left to take me into a side show and buy some lemonade and things. So when

the time come to go after the cow that evening I thought I'd play it sharp and I goes and puts on a pair of thick winter pants under the ones I had on, so the whippin' wouldn't hurt. You see Ma always whips on the legs. And while I was comin' with the cow the thought struck me that it would be a nice thing, and a good joke on Bill if I could manage to git out of the lickin' altogether. So I made up my mind to tell Pa that as I was drivin' the cow home she run into a yard where there was a gate open and a big dog caught her by the tail and his teeth got caught in the snarls and pulled it off."

Fred's eyes squinted and his shoulders shook with laughter as he continued:

"Well, what do you think? I drove the cow down the alley and put her in the pen and went into the backyard where Ma was to tell my story. She looked at the cow, and then at me with a look that made me shudder, and said, 'Haven't I told you more than once to always lead the cow so she wouldn't git into people's yards and gardens?' And she caught me by the arm and led me into the woodhouse, shut the door, went out and got a peach tree sprout and give me the worst thrashin' she ever did give me."

"But I suppose," said I, "it didn't hurt much, prepared for it as you were."

"Yes, it did, too, for she put some of the licks on my back and shoulders where I didn't have any extra clothes. Prize fighters sometimes break the rules by striking below the belt, but Ma broke it this time by striking above the belt."

I said, "Fred, I thought you said it was your Pa that whipped you that time."

"Jist wait a minute, I'm not through yet; Ma hadn't much more'n got to the house, and I was settin' on the wagon tongue finishin' up my crying' and thinkin' what a fool I'd made of myself when here come Pa cat-a-cornerin' across the garden as fast as he could walk; he took a glance

at the old cow's tail and then said, 'Fred, what does this mean?' I told him that I tied the cow's tail to the wagon so she couldn't slash Bill in the face while he was milkin'—you see the dog story didn't work right with Ma and I didn't want to try it on Pa — then he give me the savagest look I ever saw him put on, and said,

"Fred, you can't fool me; Sam Perkins saw the whole business and told me all about it. Now you've told two lies about it and I'm goin' to thrash you for that. You see he overheard the story I told Ma. The words hadn't any more than got out of his mouth when he boxed my ear on one side and then on the other with his big hand till I fell down and then he kicked me on the legs and back and every other place till I got up; then he picked up a piece of a board and paddled me till I couldn't set down straight for a week."

"You must have concluded," I remarked, "that you were paying pretty dearly for your circus and lemonade."

"Yes, but I haven't told the worst of it; I didn't git to go to the circus. Pa made me pull weeds for Mr. Weber, the gardener, on circus day to earn money to pay the horse doctor for amputatin' the bone that was left bare on the cow's tail."

It was impossible to avoid sympathy for the boy, notwithstanding his abominable tricks.

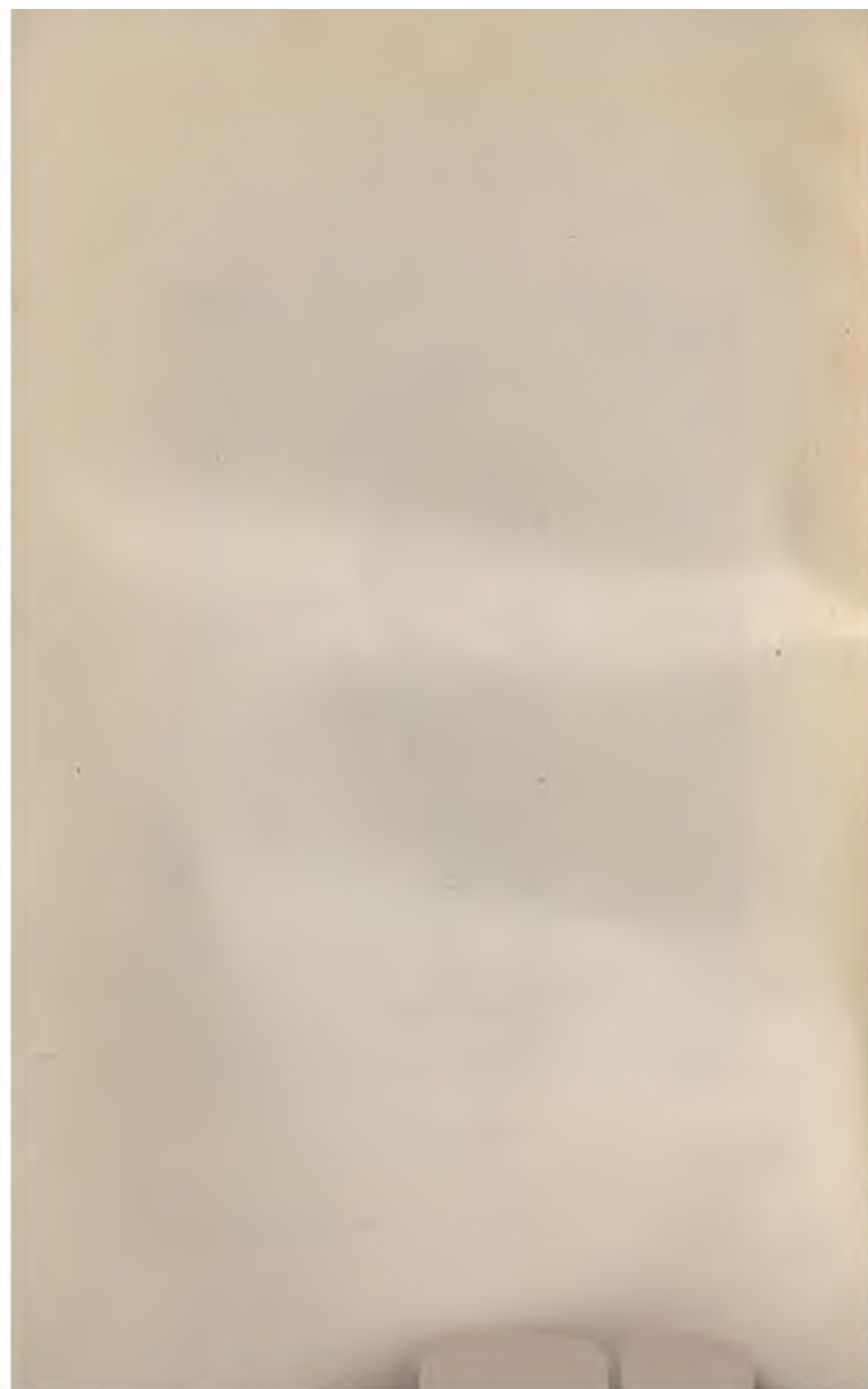
"Well, that was too bad," I said. "So you didn't get to go to the circus at all. Did your Pa lick Bill, too?"

"N-a-w, he didn't touch him. I guess he thought there had been enough lickin' for one cow's tail."





FRED INSTEP.



## CHAPTER V.

### SOME EVENTS.

On the Sunday following the incidents of the preceding chapter, I met the Stover family on their way to Sabbath school. They all recognized me, but Gertrude's smile and nod of the head were like a sunbeam bursting through a cloud. Her very countenance seemed to possess a contagious cheerfulness. As I walked on a thrill of encouragement coursed my mind. Reader, have there not been times in your life when, from adverse circumstances or ill health, gloomy feelings pervaded your soul and pessimistic thoughts were your constant companions? Then you have probably noticed that the conditions of the elements have a modifying influence on the mental state; that, after continued damp, cloudy, chilly weather, when the clouds are suddenly dissolved, the sun's rays penetrate your being and fill the dark spots with light, you at once feel a thrill of cheer and hope. Gertrude's countenance was the sun and her smile its rays, which, on that Sabbath morning dissipated the clouds that overhung me.

I had arrived at the age when a boy usually establishes his character and begins seriously to contemplate his course in life. In this undertaking I had made no further progress than to resolve to be respectable. But as to the choice of occupations, I felt handicapped so far as following my own inclination was concerned. I had an ardent desire to enter one of the learned professions and thought a good deal about the attractiveness of each, regardless of the practicability of any plan I might have decided on. The law was the first to occupy my thoughts. I had the impression that this profession was the stepping stone to wealth, social and

political influence, statesmanship and high office. The prospect was very alluring. I imagined that the work of preparing for the practice of law and the labor of its pursuit would be easy. Then I considered the inducements of the ministerial life. It had many attractions. Eminent clergymen of whom I had heard were to be envied. Henry Ward Beecher with his \$25,000 salary and the fame of Spurgeon were inspiring topics for my crude mind's meditation, for I had resolved to be great in whatever calling I might choose. And the social prominence and favoritism the pastor enjoyed were not to be scorned.

The profession of medicine was next examined and it was easily seen that this was a vocation of more varied features than those mentioned above; yet its extreme attractions were largely offset by serious objections. However, the fact that the physician was generally a prominent, influential citizen, the study of medicine revealed the mysteries of the human system, the possibilities of great remuneration for easy service and the prospect of renown lent this profession a charm that I could not ignore.

While weighing these questions in my mental scales, literature did not escape my attention. At this time Charles Dickens' works were being extensively read in this country and I often saw references in the newspapers to this famous author's recent visit to America and how he was banqueted and idolized by the American people.

I concluded that the consummation of true happiness was to have the world reading the products of one's pen and to receive the praise of critics. What was more to be desired than to be a Dickens, an Irving or a Shakespeare? I entertained no doubts as to the possibility of my being either.

In considering plans for my future career all of the professions that I knew of were more or less investigated, but on taking a practical view of the subject my aspirations and theorizing seemed to be of no avail; for while a number of the higher vocations were sufficiently attractive to induce



a decision in their favor, my financial circumstances and surroundings were a positive obstacle to my engaging in them. My parents were without either wealth or influence, and besides, my father was not thrifty and my earnings, if they should ever amount to more than my own necessities, would be needed for the support of the family at home. My educational attainments were below the average for my age, which added to the obstacles to be overcome.

After being informed as to the amount of money and time required to become qualified to enter the professions, I despaired of ever being able to gratify my ambition. For many weeks I had contemplated the pleasures and honors of a professional career. It had almost become a mania with me. I lay awake nights building air castles. I had visions of future fame and luxury, and had reveled in them like a profligate prince, but when my exalted hopes were dashed to the ground I suffered the pangs of a dethroned king.

My youthful imaginations and enthusiasm had been wrought up to a high degree and were followed by a corresponding depression when the remoteness of their object was discovered. But it was not very long till reaction took place and my mind became active in the endeavor to devise some scheme for removing the cloud that overhung my aspirations. I heard of self-made men but it was extremely discouraging to think of the tedious process of obtaining a professional education when more than half the time must be occupied in earning the money to defray the expenses of such a course.

I knew that young men of very limited means sometimes married fortunes, and I remembered that Mr. Stover possessed considerable wealth as well as a charming daughter; and it is easy to connect these facts with the wonderful effect Gertrude's friendly smile had on me that beautiful Sabbath morning.

We have now got back to an incident that marked a period in my life and had an important influence on my career.



It taught me a valuable lesson on the impressionableness of human nature. What a lasting influence an apparently insignificant act may exert. What is a smile? Is it a peculiar contraction of the muscles of the face? Yes. Anything more? It is one soul going out to another. It is said that every cloud has a silver lining. Gertrude's smile spread out all over my dark cloud and lined it with silver.

I continued my wandering, but with a more elastic step and a lighter heart. I felt more friendly to the world and believed the world felt more friendly toward me. The change in my feelings was so sudden and so striking that it laid the foundation for a life-long study of mental influences that has been a constant help to me in the accomplishment of my purposes. It has made Psychology an interesting study to me. This circumstance originated a saying that I often use; a smile will cure the blues as quickly as a fright will the hiccoughs.

As I walked on I was struck with an impulse to attend divine services that morning and in a few minutes found myself approaching the Congregational church; but did not go in, because, inasmuch as I had not been in the habit of attending church, and, furthermore, had scarcely ever been inside of this particular one, I was afraid Gertrude would think I was following her. My thoughts and actions were prompted by the prevailing opinion that undue manifestation of interest in the opposite sex is apt to repel rather than attract.

I spent the following week in a much more comfortable state of mind than I did the previous one; and on Sunday morning when the exercises at the Congregational Sunday school commenced, I was counted amongst its visitors. But when the classes were instructed to assume their respective duties I was invited by the superintendent to join the school which I did with no small degree of pleasure, and through his courtesy I was allowed to select my class. I went into Albert Bruce's mixed class of young people. Why did I

choose this class? I had learned through sly inquiry, that Gertrude Stover was a member of it. But on entering the room I was truck with chagrin and consternation on seeing the hateful Bob Holmes. This caused my mind to be occupied more with imaginations and conjectures than with the study of sacred history.

This class was a model one, composed of twelve or fifteen intelligent young men and women, whose ages, with the exception of Miss Stover, ranged from twenty to twenty-five years. I learned that Gertrude's membership in a class so much her seniors was on account of her unusual intelligence and womanly appearance. But how was Bob Holmes' presence to be accounted for? Was he there because Gertrude was? I suspected that this was the explanation; and when I saw them start off together just in front of the rest of the Stover family at the close of the church services, which followed the Sabbath school, my heart almost quit beating. But this vital organ soon rallied sufficiently to enable me to walk home. In spite of the above episode the following week was more cheerful to me than the previous one; and the next Sunday morning found me in my place at the Congregational Sabbath school. But another embarrassing situation confronted me. I was only two years older than Gertrude, and if she was associated with her seniors in the study of the Scriptures on account of her superior intelligence how was I, whose education, especially in this branch of knowledge had been sadly neglected, going to justify my presence in the class?

I settled the question in my own mind by imagining that the disadvantage could be overcome by extraordinary effort. I had my share of conceit and assurance, and concluded that I would be bright and smart. It was my determination to attract attention and gain favor by showing an unusual desire to learn, and also to show what I already knew. In the latter, this resolution was quite successfully carried out, as will be shown by a few examples: On the



second Sabbath of my attendance the question was asked the class in general, "Why was it that Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Christ did not figure in the last days of Christ's stay on earth?" I promptly answered, "Because he had been sold into Egypt." On the next Sabbath I was asked to mention some of the women who were prominent at the crucifixion, and my ready answer was, Martha, the Virgin Mary and Mary, the mother of Christ." The class was not so courteous as it was on the previous occasion. I noticed a suppressed smile on the faces of a number, and some even gave audible vent to their risibilities.

I did not realize exactly, what had produced the effect, but was pretty strongly impressed with the idea that I had made a ludicrous blunder. It caused me to be more careful about giving answers, but I resorted to another trick that proved fully as disastrous, namely, of unduly manifesting a desire to learn. A short time after this incident our lesson appearing in Isaiah, I asked if Solomon was not a greater prophet than Isaiah. Evidence of another blunder at once showed itself. Even our dignified teacher allowed a smile to slyly creep over his countenance. But I was again ignorant of the nature of my mistake. I had heard that Solomon was the wisest man, and, supposing that wisdom and prophecy were synonymous terms the question seemed to be a proper one.

Experiences during the week led me to conclude that attending Sunday school and church did not always remove the thorns and strew one's pathway with flowers, for some agonizing things transpired. While walking along the street I heard a member of my Sunday school class say to another one who was passing in front of the store, "I wonder if Joseph, the carpenter, has returned from Egypt yet." Of course I had no difficulty in interpreting this remark. It was provoking but not so annoying as a question my employer's son put to me on entering the store the next

day. He said, "Have you found out who was the greater prophet, Isaiah or Solomon?" I passed on pretending not to hear him, but his insulting taunt had a harsh, bitter sound to my ear; and it mortified me the more because our Sunday school superintendent was present and heard it. I was sure from his actions that he understood the situation.

My pride was wounded, and it seemed that each day had some additional and more painful humiliation in store for me. On the following evening while going to supper I discovered, as I passed the premises of Mr. Comstock, a party playing croquet on their beautiful grounds. In the party were Gertrude Stover and another of Mr. Bruce's Sunday school class. I stopped, expecting to exchange pleasant greetings and spend a few minutes watching the game; but no sooner had I raised my hat, bowed and smiled than the irrepressible Fred Instep, who was sitting in the shade of a rose bush watching the game, cried out, "Hello, Joseph, how's Egypt?" This was exasperating. My feelings could better be imagined than described. I forced a broad smile at Fred's impudence, but my actual feelings would have prompted me to kick him and quote Shakespeare: "If every hair on his head were a life my vengeance hath stomach for them all." But I only blurted out, "Egypt's all all right." The temperature at this particular spot dropped several degrees. I got chilly and walked on; but had I given vent to my temper I would have made it hot for Fred. My pride was wounded. I was now convinced that my anachronisms and blunders had been "told out of school," and the people were making laughing stock of me. This affair placed me in a dilemma; I must either continue my attendance at Sabbath school and live it down, at least live through this disparagement or stay away, thus acknowledging my lack of stamina. It will be easily understood why I went to bed late, wondering what new torture would present itself on the morrow, but only had to wait until three o'clock in the afternoon to find out. I was sent on an errand which

led me by the Stover residence, where I saw Gertrude and Bob Holmes with another couple playing lawn tennis. I passed by on the other side, pretending not to see them, and tried to think lightly of the circumstance.

Two uneventful weeks passed, then the first Congregational social was announced. I made myself reasonably happy in the anticipation of my debut in respectable society. It was to be a new association for me.

The attendance was large and it was an enjoyable affair; but I spent most of the time watching Bob Holmes and wondering if my presence did not remind the guests of the Joseph, Martha and Solomon incidents. The only thing I enjoyed or that interested me particularly, was a conversation by a little company in the corner on the progress of the nineteenth century and the prospective advancement of science and art, in which Albert Bruce and Gertrude Stover were the principal participants.

Every time that I had met Gertrude, every observation I had made of her conduct, every expression I had heard from others concerning her, added to her attractiveness; and the experience at that sociable increased my interest in her more than any previous circumstance had. I more than ever realized the brightness of her intellect and the goodness of her character; and the hope and desire of my heart was that the admiration might be mutual; but satisfactory evidence of this had not been established.



## CHAPTER VI.

### A SCHEME.

Dan Rice's great show was to exhibit in our town in a few days, and, knowing the small boy's penchant for the circus, and that Fred's enthusiasm in that direction was of an extraordinary degree, I said to him a few days before the event, "Fred, are you going to the circus?"

"I will if I can," was his anxious reply.

"Have you the money to pay your way?"

"No."

"Then how do you expect to get in? Will your Pa give you the money?"

"No, sir, he'll never furnish me money to go to the circus or anything else. When any thing like that comes along he always studies up some bad thing that I have done and then says I got to stay at home for punishment. That's the kind of a duck he is."

"Then," said I, "you'll have to depend on something turning up to enable you to go; is there any prospect?" He stood with head down picking the ragged end of his suspender into a fringe, his expression indicating great anxiety, evidently expecting something. Perhaps my thoughts and the tone of my voice enabled his sagacious mind to divine my purpose.

"I don't know," he said, "if I knowed of anything that had a half dollar under it, something would turn up mighty quick, you bet. Maybe I can git to carry water to the elephant; but that's awful uncertain."

"Well," said I, "Fred, you've been a pretty good boy, and now I'm going to give you money enough to take you into the show and also to pay for a glass or two of red

lemonade." I handed him sixty cents in fractional currency, coins of all kinds having been retired from circulation at the beginning of the rebellion. He looked at the money and then at me, reached out his hand, partially withdrew it and then took the money. His expression was a mixture of the willing and the reluctant. With a voice that showed emotion, he said, "Thank you. You're very kind. I'll pay you back some time." After assuring him that he was both welcome and worthy we separated.

The next day after the circus, while my favor and the show were fresh in Fred's mind, I said to him, "Fred, you and I have always been good friends, haven't we?"

"Yes," he said, "so far as I know, we have."

"I want to ask a favor of you, Fred."

"Well, what is it?"

"I want somebody that I can trust — some sharp fellow, to help me carry out a scheme." His countenance showed that he was surprised, pleased, yet mystified.

"Maybe I couldn't do it," he said.

"O yes, you can. It's a secret of course, but you're the very boy that can be trusted with a secret."

"Well, what is it?" It was evident that my attempt at flattery was successful.

"Now," said I, "you'll swear by the sun, moon and stars that you'll never tell anybody?"

"Yes, sir, you needn't be afraid to trust me."

"Well, this is it: I want to learn the telegraphing and railroad business."

"Yes, well," said he, "that's all right, but I ain't got no telegraph nor railroad for you to learn on." The habit of getting a little funny even on serious occasions was proverbial with Fred.

"But," said I, "you can help me get a job just the same if you'll try."

"Don't you think so? I didn't know I had so much influence with the railroad companies."



"I'll tell you, Fred," I continued, "what I want you to do; I think I can get Bob Holmes' place. You see he hasn't treated me right and then he's said some awful mean things about you, too, and now if we work the thing right we can turn Mr. Hopkins, the agent, against him and get him discharged."

"All right," said Fred, "I'll help you fix him. What do you want me to do? Have you got a scheme made up?"

"Yes, this is it: we'll convince Mr. Hopkins that Bob has been making too many mistakes and neglecting his business —"

"Yes," interrupted Fred, "and I think he's got girl on the brain."

"And," said I, "we'll show worse things than these; we'll prove that he's been stealing from the company."

"We'll have him in the calaboose first thing he knows, won't we?" the boy suggested; his interest in the matter evidently having been aroused by Bob's alleged remarks about him.

"You know, Fred," I continued, "you've had an uncle visiting here lately, —"

"Yes, but you ain't goin' to git my Uncle Bill into the scrape, are you?"

"O no, of course not, but we can use that circumstance to a good advantage, perhaps. You manage to see Mr. Hopkins kind of accidentally and tell him that the day that your uncle started back to Iowa you went with him to the station to send a telegram to his wife, that nobody was there and he couldn't send it, and that a few minutes later you saw Bob playing croquet in Mr. Fraser's yard."

Fred turned his head slightly to one side, opened his eyes wide and held them steady. He was not looking at anything in particular, but his mind was active. Was he considering the plausibility of this story? Was he imagining the rest of the scheme, or was he consulting his conscience? After several seconds he broke the silence with, "Are you sure

this plan'll work? Maybe Bob was at the depot at that time, or maybe Mr. Hopkins was there, or maybe if Bob was away he was out on an errand that was all right, and maybe he'll prove by Fraser's folks that he didn't play croquet at their house. You see you don't want to git caught in a trap of your own settin'."

I was pleased with Fred's precaution for it gave assurance of his cunning and ability to render efficient aid in the consummation of my plans. I assured him that I, too, was acting cautiously, by informing him that Bob actually did play croquet at Mr. Fraser's about the time referred to.

"So you see," I remarked, "if Mr. Hopkins should inquire of the Fraser family about the matter their answer would be against Bob because they would say he did play croquet in their yard, and since its been several days, they wouldn't know but that it was at the time your uncle called to send the dispatch."

"Well," said he, "you've got the scheme fixed up purty good, but how are you goin' to prove that he stole from the company?"

"O," said I, "that'll be easy enough. I want you to help me in this, too."

"All right, I'll do anything to git ahead of the galoot. He'd better not say mean things about me. I don't want my character damaged."

"You know," I continued, "Mr. Stark, my boss frequently gets packages by express from Philadelphia; now I want you to tell Mr. Hopkins that the other day when you were in our store I brought in a package and told Mr. Stark that Bob charged fifty cents expressage on it, but it was the same kind of a package that they had always charged only twenty-five cents for. This will get him into trouble because Mr. Hopkins will look on the book and see that Bob accepted for only twenty-five cents; then he'll ask me about it and I'll declare that I did pay Bob fifty cents."

"Yes, but that wouldn't be stealin' from the express

company, it would be stealin' from Mr. Stark," was Fred's astute reply; and of course I had to agree with him, but said, "It will cause Mr. Hopkins to brand him as a thief just the same." Fred nodded his head.

"Now, Fred," said I, "do you think you can help me carry out this scheme?"

"Yes, I guess I can; but what am I goin' to git out of it?"

"O, I'll make it all right with you if we make a success of it." The boy seemed pleased with the opportunity I was offering him to exercise certain talents in which he was in no wise deficient.

It was well that our interview was now completed, for, "Freddie, you come here right away, and no fooling," rang out from the back door of the Instep residence. The tone of Mrs. Instep's voice and the speed with which Fred crossed the fence in the direction of the house, indicated that the boy had left an unfinished job to answer my call.

A couple of days after this meeting Fred was loitering about the depot, apparently to no purpose, but in fact waiting for an opportunity to begin the execution of our scheme. Finally Mr. Hopkins not only gave the desired opportunity but opened the way for Fred to broach the subject. Stepping out on to the platform, he said, "Fred, have you heard from that uncle of yours that was here a few weeks ago, since he returned to Iowa?"

"Yes, Ma got a letter from him — did you know him?" was Fred's somewhat excited reply. "Say, Mr. Hopkins," he continued, "Uncle was awful mad the day he left here because there was nobody here when him and me came down to send a dispatch to Aunt."

"Was there no one here to wait on your uncle?"

"No, not a soul. We looked all round, in the warehouse and everywhere; the office door was open but nobody in."

"There should have been, for I always leave Bob in charge when I go away. I'll have to investigate the matter."



"But I know where Bob was; for I didn't go back home with Uncle. I went round by the mill and as I passed Mr. Fraser's house Bob was there playin' croquet."

Mr. Hopkins said nothing but was meditative. Fred looked up at him with a pleased expression and said, "I know another man that was awful mad at Bob the other day."

"Who was it, and what was it about?"

"It was Mr. Stark. Bob charged him double price on an express package."

"Do you know what day it was and how much he charged him?"

"It was last Saturday, and Bob charged him fifty cents when the price was only twenty-five."

Mr. Hopkins walked straightway into the office with an air that satisfied Fred that he was going to refer to his books.

The boy walked off with an unusual earnestness. There was elation in his very step. He came directly to me and reported progress. I had anticipated his actions and was prepared with a reward in the shape of a bag of choice candies which I had secretly extracted from the shelf in the store. When I handed it to him he looked disappointed. Evidently he was expecting something more substantial, but I assured him that the final pay day would come when the job was completed.

The whole plan worked like perfect machinery; Mr. Hopkins put our stories with the fleshy woman affair on picnic day and some other objectionable things in Robert Holmes' conduct and concluded that he was untrustworthy, and at once began to contemplate a change of apprentices.

It was not long until a suitable opportunity offered itself for me to express to Mr. Hopkins the strong desire of my heart, namely, to learn the telegraph and railroad business. In doing so I tried to avoid any signs of entertaining the slightest hope of securing a situation under him. While



there was nothing in his remarks to warrant encouragement, I was sure that his manner showed that he was considerably interested in my remarks, and subsequent events proved that I was not mistaken. The disparaging reports about Robert Holmes, which were well corroborated, through mine and Fred's skillful manipulation, created a coolness between him and his superior, and any known desire on the part of a young man to secure an apprenticeship in a railroad station was quite welcome to the latter.

Having good assurance of this, I took pains, as often as possible, to throw myself into Mr. Hopkins' company, without, however, indicating any desire to supplant his apprentice. One day while lamenting the course of events and pondering over discouragements, the clouds of my discontent suddenly broke way and I concluded that, after all, I was born under a lucky star. Mr. Hopkins asked me if I wouldn't like to take Robert Holmes' place at the station.

"Why, is Bob going to quit?" was my cunning reply.

"He will as soon as I can find a suitable young man to take his place."

"Well," said I, "nothing would suit me better than to go right in with you to learn the business. But I had no idea that there was anything wrong between you and Bob." I saw at once that this last remark was indiscreet. Was it not suggestive? Had Mr. Hopkins intimated that he was going to discharge Bob for a specific cause? Why should I take it for granted that there was any trouble? Might not Mr. Hopkins suspicion that I possessed some unhealthy knowledge of the affair?

But it seemed that my uneasiness was not well founded, for in a few days I was installed into the office of telegraph and railroad apprentice, which I felt sure was the stepping-stone to the enviable position of millionaire magnate of some of the great railroad systems of the world. My fortune was assured; my joy for the present seemed complete. I felt the effects of exaltation. I would soon be a man of

authority. I had envied Robert Holmes, but now, he would envy me, and I could afford to pity him.

Now that the change had been made at the station, I entertained some secret thoughts as to whether or not it would effect Gertrude Stover's sentiments toward me and Bob Holmes.

I threw all the zeal and vigor of my youth into the trades that I had set in to learn. It was my ambition to rank high in my new vocation.

A few days after entering upon the duties of my new situation I met Fred on the street. A broad significant smile on his face was easily interpreted; it indicated what was uppermost in his mind.

"Well," he said, "you got the job, didn't you? How do you like it?"

"I think I will like it first rate. We worked the thing fine, didn't we?"

"Yes, sir, we're dandies, ain't we?"

"I'm very much obliged to you, Fred," said I, "for your assistance in the matter."

"Is that all you're goin' to do about it?" said he, with a suggestion of disappointment in his countenance. "Ain't you goin' to divide up with me?"

Not having anything with me suitable for a reward, I only said, "I'll make it all right with you, Fred, sometime."

"Yes, but remember that gittin' jobs for people's cash down. I don't run my employment office on credit. I want three dollars for this job. If there's anything a feller ought to have good pay for, it's doin' dirty work for others."

This circumstance brought thoughts to my mind that I should have had before. I now began to realize that I was at Fred's mercy. He possessed knowledge that might place me in an unenviable situation. Did a boy noted for recklessness have sufficient regard for his own reputation to prevent him from betraying another on slight provocation? The uneasy state of my mind prompted me to go at once and



borrow a dollar for him and promise more in the near future.

We separated, and as I hurried toward the depot I meditated over the necessity of concocting some plan for keeping Fred under obligation to me, but before reaching my destination my thoughts were happily diverted from the subject; I met Gertrude Stover. She smiled, stopped and even congratulated me on being so fortunate as to secure a situation of promise and possibilities. I was pleased. Whatever had been my misgivings in the past, I now felt sure of Gertrude's special friendship and interest in me. Certainly I had struck a piece of luck. I tried to think if I hadn't picked up a horse shoe somewhere. My imagination ran high. I speculated on the future. I was victorious in the affair with Robert Holmes and had I now conquered Gertrude Stover's heart? I would be generous and reasonable. The average person couldn't stand prosperity but I would be greater than the average. As the occasional escort of Gertrude, I would be the envy of the very boys who had looked down on me.

The present winter, which had just begun, would be a season of great social enjoyment with me; and just before the holidays I was convinced that my anticipations were to be realized; Gertrude very courteously accepted an invitation to go with me to a festival given by the Soldiers' Aid Society. When I received the answer to my note — how changed things were; it hadn't been long since I was acting in the capacity of note carrier myself, but now the boys go at my command — I could have thrown my hat through the ceiling. I could have lit a cigar with a five dollar bill, I could have kicked a dog. Luck! Why I looked around to see if some one hadn't been throwing old shoes at me. I would ask my mother if the fairies did not dance at my birth. But this exultation and bliss was to be of short duration. On our way home from the festival, Gertrude informed me that she was going away to enter college im-

mediately after the holidays with the intention of taking a complete course. I was not prepared for this news and it somewhat shocked me. But I found some consolation in thoughts of the advantage of a higher education and the anticipation of an interesting letter correspondence.



## CHAPTER VII.

### CONTEMPLATING A CHANGE OF OCCUPATION.

On the first anniversary of my installation into the railroad business I took a retrospective view of the year's experience and was compelled to admit that it had not been satisfactory. I had not enjoyed the interest and zeal that were essential to the realization of my plans and aspirations in regard to advancement and promotion. Several things had combined to produce this effect, among which was the harsh manner in which I had latterly been treated by Mr. Hopkins and his apparent lack of interest in me. I went on, week after week, vacillating between a determination to win my superior's favor by the faithful discharge of duties, and a resolution to quit and prepare, if possible, for one of the learned professions. But, owing to my limited financial resources, the latter plan seemed absolutely impracticable.

Time did not promote contentment with my present occupation and prospects. I occasionally engaged in conversation with Dr. Starr, one of our well educated and successful physicians. One day I said to him, "Doctor, I believe I would like to be a physician. I think I would enjoy the practice of medicine."

"That is the kind of men," said the doctor, "that ought to be in the profession; those who have a natural inclination that way and a taste for the work."

"But," said I, "the trouble with me is, I haven't the means necessary to get a medical education."

"That," said the doctor, "is a very important consideration. While there are men in some parts of the country engaged in the practice, and are making money, who have

spent very little money and time in qualifying themselves for the business, it requires a good deal of time and some money, to prepare one to do justice to his patrons and the profession."

"How long," I asked, "does it take, and how much does it cost to go through a regular course of study?" ..

"The time is from three to four years, and the expense depends on circumstances." The conversation was interrupted by a patient's entering the office.

Further investigation as to the expense of a medical course and becoming established in practice was anything but encouraging to a young man in my circumstances; but it was only a few weeks that I lamented my lot, for fortune favored me again.

A generous, public spirited uncle with means to spare, on learning of my desires and ambition, offered to pay my expenses through a thorough course of study and then "set me up in business," on terms that were so liberal that I could have no excuse for refusing.

I was elated. My joy knew no bounds. I knew now that I was born under a lucky star. I couldn't help harboring the thought that I was one of those proverbial men of destiny. Visions of future greatness, wealth and pleasure seemed to force themselves into my thoughts. At the first opportunity I approached Dr. Starr with a proposition to enter his office as a student of medicine under his supervision. He talked very frankly on the subject; and while I had to admit that his questions and comments were wise and proper, they almost discouraged me.

"What prompted you to choose medicine as a vocation?" he asked, with the seriousness of a judge in a court of justice.

"Because I thought I would like it," was my answer.

"Why do you think you would like it?"

"Well, it's an honorable calling, and I think there's money in it."

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"Yes, it is an honorable calling. If a man will honor the profession it will honor him. Have you weighed the matter thoroughly? Have you taken into consideration the grave responsibilities you propose to assume, the arduous task in the first place of properly preparing yourself for the practice of medicine, the hardships, trials and tribulations of the doctor?"

This staggered me. I actually shuddered. Weighed the matter thoroughly! Why, I had estimated only one side of the question. Grave responsibilities! What did I know about responsibilities—especially the grave kind? I thought I had had some trials and tribulations and survived.

But the doctor was waiting for an answer. What must I say? If I should give a plain affirmative answer he might think I was misrepresenting myself, and if I admitted that I did not appreciate the situation he might look with disfavor on my proposition. Yet with a man of Dr. Starr's serious character, an evasive answer would not do; so I just said, "I have studied over the matter a good deal and believe that I could do as well as the average doctor."

The Doctor changed chairs, looked me square in the face and said, "Perhaps I am too exacting in my questioning, but I realize that few medical men of experience even, comprehend the importance to humanity of their position as practitioners of medicine. The ministry is of scarcely less consequence. The physician is primarily depended on to relieve physical pain and suffering and to save life. With the myriads of ailments that afflict the race, the occult influences that produce them, and the obscure complications with which they are attended, the multitudes of remedies in our materia medica, most of which are but slightly known, and the uncertainty of therapeutics make it a crime for anyone to undertake the practice of medicine unless he has a clear, comprehensive mind, an honest heart and determined purpose.



Supposing a doctor is rendering services to a man with a curable, but possibly fatal disease, and, through the doctor's having failed to acquire the best available knowledge and skill in his profession, the man dies, Is it not probable that the doctor has, from a failure of duty, prevented the fulfillment of an important mission on earth?"

This awful, serious presentation of my contemplated undertaking almost terrified me. The doctor remained silent a while. I didn't know whether I was expected to respond or not. I was in a state of mental paralysis. Finally, when cerebral function was established, I wondered if the doctor was not regarding my proposition with disfavor and this was his peculiar way of deterring me from my purpose.

He commenced again: "But the mission of the medical man doesn't end with the relief of physical infirmities; it is his duty to teach the people how to avoid the necessity of his services. The true physician is a philanthropist. Nor is this all; I believe in the doctrine, of which our young physician, Albert Bruce, is an enthusiastic exponent, that before the human race can become what it is intended to be, we should have been long ago, all sinful and criminal acts will have to be recognized as the result of disease, either mental or physical, and the medical profession must take the lead in removing this powerful hindrance to moral and physical advancement.

There are many pleasing and attractive features about the study of medicine. In the first place the student has a constant warning about the human system — how wonderfully man is made. As in all vocations, remuneration is the remuneration; but this is not a hesitation, for with proper management a comfortable surplus may be obtained, but a comfortable surplus may be obtained in any other profession. The successful physician stands second to none in



social affairs; he is admitted to literary circles and his views on profound subjects and matters of general interest are sought and respected. He occupies a place in the confidence and affections of his patrons that no other person does. There is a peculiar trait in human nature that seems to impel people, under all circumstances to defend their family physician. If he suits them they admire him to the loving point, and hold him as dearly as a member of their own household. There is nothing too good for him. The patrons of a physician confide sacred things and vital secrets to him that are never given even to their father confessor. Wives impart information to their doctor that they withhold from their husbands. And then it is a great satisfaction to realize that you have been able to relieve suffering humanity.

But the physician must be honest and true to his calling; for as soon as he sacrifices that real love for his profession that lies at the foundation of his scientific progress, and descends to a mere fortune-hunter, he necessarily becomes a quack and an imposter."

At the end of this second lecture I was feeling more comfortable. I believed that the doctor's remarks had an honest purpose. He looked as if he were expecting a response from me. My mind was full of incoherent thoughts but I didn't know what to say. It wouldn't do to say the wrong thing, thereby making an unfavorable impression. The doctor, evidently appreciating my embarrassment, and noticing something ludicrous in my manner, emitted what I took for a smile of ridicule. This threw me into a retortive humor and I said, confusedly, "Doctor, you seem to be stuck on your trade."

The instant this remark escaped my lips I would have recalled it. The thought flashed through my mind that I had spoiled my suit by an undignified expression; but happily, Dr. Starr thought I was excusable for I had only offset his own rudeness.

We both indulged in hearty laughter, and the doctor continued: "If a young man of good intellect decides on a medical career and pursues it with energy and proper motives it is sure to develop him into a noble manhood. I have given only one side of the physician's life. He earns many a dollar that he never gets. Often in the dead hour of night while he is enjoying the rest he so much needs, the door bell rings and a messenger appears with an urgent demand for the doctor to make a trip several miles into the country. In view of the prospective fee, the ring is not an unwelcome sound, but the mercury is away below zero, the wind is blowing a gale, the air is full of flying snow and the roads are blockaded with the same element. On arriving at his destination the doctor's hands are so stiff with cold that he has to call for some one to tie his team; he goes to the house as quickly as his benumbed legs will carry him; the end of his nose is as white as note paper and there is a spot on each cheek as hard as a bone. He relieves the patient's suffering and perhaps save his life, but the fee, twenty times the amount of which would not be sufficient compensation for the services and exposure, is never paid. And it is not always in the matter of collections that the physician fails to receive justice. Frequently he renders efficient services and accomplishes all that could be desired, but just at the happy convalescent point some friend (?) who has more zeal than discretion, sounds a false alarm and prevails on the friends to call in — with no warning to the attending physician — their pet doctor who 'never fails to cure a case like this.' The word goes out over the neighborhood that Dr. Blank, through his failure to do any good, had to be discharged and Dr. Surepop was called and saved the patient's life.

In every community you will find persons, especially women, who have no regard or respect for any but their own family physician. They are very officious, they are busybodies, and the physician who undertakes to compete with



their pet doctor may expect his reputation to suffer from their bitter prejudice and slanderous tongues. They will be totally blind to his merits and virtue. These people may be very pious; they may be valuable church members so far as external religion is concerned, but they have forgotten some of the most essential examples and precepts of the Master. If these people's conduct is the index to their conscience they do not believe that the Golden Rule applies to the physician who happens not to be their favorite. There is nothing to unfair for them to do to help their pet or to injure his competitors."

The doctor's face showed considerable animation. He arose and went to the window, looked out on the street a minute, then turned to me and said, "Now, Reuben, go and think this matter over and report here at nine o'clock to-morrow morning."

I entered Dr. Starr's office at the appointed hour in high spirits, feeling sure that I would win the doctor's admiration and favor by stating that our interview the day before had increased my desire to take a medical course.

"Well," said he, "are you still in the notion of becoming a disciple of Esculapius?"

His countenance showing no sign of pleasantry, I thought a serious answer was necessary; but what did he mean? Was it an easy question? One that I ought to be able to answer?

Disciple! Esculapius! What could I say and be sure not to expose my ignorance. Dr. Starr was a dignified gentleman; he had great regard for merit and worthiness, and perhaps my fate depended on the answer to his question. My thoughts ran fast. I wondered if he wasn't sounding me on my religious convictions. He was a member of the Congregational church where I had been attending services, and some of the members had invited me to unite with the church. I couldn't associate the word disciple with anything but the Bible. I had attended Sunday School a good deal during the last year or so, but couldn't recall any prophet, priest

or king by the name of Esculapius. There was no time for meditation; but, happily, I gave a safe answer to the question.

"I'm anxious to get settled down to the study of medicine anyhow."

The doctor expressed himself as pleased with my earnestness and enthusiasm, and we completed arrangements and terms for my course of study under his preceptorship.

"Now," said he, "I hope you will be diligent in your studies and resolve to reach the highest point in medical knowledge, and that at the end you may be able to realize that your professional career has been successful. Be faithful and conscientious. You will meet circumstances and experiences that will try your courage, your honesty, your endurance, your patience—and your patients, too," he added, smiling;—"and your faith in humanity, and your religion. Remember that the paramount element in the true success of a physician lies not so much in the number of patients he treats and the quantity of money he earns, as in the amount of suffering he relieves, the lives he saves, and the aid he furnishes in advancing the science and increasing the efficiency of the profession. Be fair and honest with your professional brethern. Acknowledge the rights of competitors. No physician has a right to monopolize territory. If you cannot hold your practice against a competitor, you have no right to it. Don't deceive your patients nor misrepresent yourself."

How these remarks elated me. I was puffed up. I was exalted to the skies. "Your professional brethern"—my professional brethern! My patients! My competitors! Why, my mind was congested with imaginations. I almost felt that a lot of rich people were waiting for my professional services and I was liable to be called in consultation with some of our eminent medical men. I was right out in the middle of the road to fame and wealth. It was a level, solid road—perhaps a little down grade, too.



When the doctor paused I felt it necessary for me to say something as a matter of relief, but all I could think of was, "That's so."

Dr. Starr continued: "You are placing yourself in a position of great responsibility. One that furnishes opportunity for the accomplishment of unlimited good. The world is beginning to learn the importance of the medical man as an agent in the advancement of civilization and the promotion of true and effective Christianity. I base the assertion on the theory that purity and strength of body are essential to proper exercise of right principle. We are in the dawn of a medical revolution. Investigators are at work; facts will be revealed before the close of the present century that will convulse the scientific world. Long established theories as to pathology, therapeutics and the cause of disease will be abandoned; speculation and error will be supplanted by accurate scientific knowledge. The better man understands himself the more capable he will be of living in accordance with the laws of his being, and as the physician is devoted to study and investigation along these lines the race looks to him as a guide, and when the climax of human good is reached he will deserve the larger share of credit."

He ceased speaking, looked me in the face as if waiting for a response. I was dumb. The doctor smilingly said, "Now what do you think about it?"

"Medicine is a bigger thing than I thought it was," I confusedly answered.

"My object," said the doctor, "in making these statements is to impress upon your mind the magnitude of your undertaking, and the broad and interesting field that lies before you.

There are many branches in this course, but you should study each one thoroughly, making it a rule not to pass anything between the lids of the different books from anatomy to psychology until you understand it."

He took me into a private room, and, exposing a full grown human skeleton suspended from a bracket by a spiral wire spring at the top of the skull, handed me a copy of Gray's Anatomy and said,

"Your first lesson will be in osteology. As you read the descriptions impress them upon your mind by laying your eye and also your finger on every bone, ridge, condyle, process, tuberosity, fossa and foramen."

He then retired. This initiation into my new work was so sudden and business-like that I hardly realized the situation; but left alone in a closed room with the naked frame of a dead man — the like of which I had never before seen — I began to experience peculiar sensations. The grinning teeth, the vacant eye sockets, the absent nose and fleshless hands and arms presented, to me, a hideous sight. Thoughts bordering on superstition crowded in on me till I became quite nervous. There stands before me the remains of a being, who but a short time ago was like myself; perhaps enjoying the same hopes, ambitions and aspirations that I am. Have I any assurance but that some time, in the not very distant future, my remains will be rendering the same kind of service that these are? Possibly before another decade is added to the past, frolicsome medical students, in their wanton mirth, will be practicing their pranks on me as they generally do on those whose last office on earth is to contribute to medical science. And perhaps among those students will be some of my acquaintances. It makes me shudder!

While these thoughts and imaginations were weakening my heart beats and almost stopping my breath, I heard a rattling in the direction of the skeleton, which I had turned away from. I looked around; the hands were swinging back and forth, and the lower jaw was in motion, causing the teeth to gnash. O, goblins!

My first impulse was to muster up strength enough to leave the room at once and declare my medical course at an

end; but before I acted the frightful phenomenon was explained by the wind puffing through the window and agitating the skeleton again. It was as great a relief as when you wake up and find that it was only a dream.

While those uneasy feelings which bordered on actual fear, had left me, my mind was in such a state that I was unable, during the rest of the day, to do more than to turn the leaves in the book and look at the pictures. But then, I was a medical student and walked on the streets that day with an air that suggested a sudden increase in my stature and avoridupois. I was no longer an ordinary boy and did not belong any more to the common herd.

Before the sun went down I left my measure with the tailor for as fine a suit of clothes as could be bought in the town. From the tailor shop I went to a store and purchased a box of paper collars and some fine neckties, and resolved to put on a new collar every day. This was the first investment I made with my uncle's money — my education fund. A few days later I bought a silk hat and a silver watch. I was now as well fixed for putting on style as any young man in town. I seemed to be living in a different atmosphere.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### TRYING AGAIN.

Encouraged by my exaltation and enhanced prospects, I resolved to renew my efforts at a project, the failure of which a year ago had caused me no small amount of worry, namely, to open a correspondence with Gertrude Stover. I would try it again. Her mother had interfered before, but Gertrude was a year older now, and then, I was a much more important individual than at that time. In fact, I never had considered the incident closed. I did not think hard of Mrs. Stover. Nothing but shortsightedness and the passion of youth could have condemned her advice in this matter.

"No, Gertrude," she said, as they were inspecting the latter's school clothes preparatory to packing them, "my great desire is that I may appreciate my responsibility and be wise and intelligent in directing and guiding my daughters. Writing letters is a harmless act, and a correspondence between a young woman and a young man, is in itself no indication of evil, but for a girl sixteen years old in college to carry on a correspondence with a young man when there are no special conditions of friendship between them, is an act of questionable propriety and uncertain results. I have known just such circumstances to change a promising girl's life and thwart her prospects forever. Letters sometimes create passion and passion often sways the judgment. I hope, dear girl, you will confine your correspondence to your family relations and a few lady friends."

"Very well, Mother," said Gertrude, "I am willing to take your advice, for it is right, and I know your judgment is always safe."



"You are a dutiful child," Mrs. Stover resumed, "and I can trust you. There is always a reward at the end of duty, and penalty is sure to follow disobedience. Gertrude, you are going away from us, and I trust you will appreciate the object of your going and"—

The sentence was broken by the discovery of Gertrude's emotion. Her heart was welling out over her eyelids. She quickly wiped the tears from her cheek, raised her head, nerved herself up and said, in a firm voice, "Go on, Mother, I'll be strong."

Mrs. Stover smiled lovingly and said, "Dear girl, your object is to get an education and prepare yourself for a higher degree of usefulness and enjoyment, and may God forbid that anything should interfere with the consummation of this purpose. Your environments will be new, but don't forget home influences and precepts. A young person's life away from home is beset with temptations, and many a sad home is the result of yielding to baleful influences. I believe that all women want to, and intend to do right, and be pure and respectable. In a large majority of cases in which they fail in this, they do so before they know it. It is the insidious first step that forms the threshold to the iniquitous life. It is a step, however, that can easily be avoided; but when once taken it is more difficult to avoid the second one, and the third one is still harder to escape. Going into a saloon doesn't make a man a drunkard, nor does his first drink, but the first drink makes the beginning which is absolutely necessary to the end. So a man does not destroy a woman's chasity by holding her hand or kissing her, but these breaches of propriety break the ice and render a more serious act easier, and, step by step the end is reached. And what is a woman when her character is gone? Nothing. A woman's first step toward the destruction of her character may easily be avoided, but after it is taken she may be helpless. Women may desire riches, but their best dowery is chastity. When a

man renders a woman unchaste she is doubly robbed; she has lost her honor and his respect for her. Beauty fades and wealth is transient, but virtue is bright and eternal. O, if girls could only appreciate the importance of some apparently insignificant things!"

Mrs. Stover talked frankly to her daughter in regard to the peculiarities of her sex, giving instructions for taking care of herself. Gertrude went to the window. She seemed to have her eyes on something outside. Her mother, noticing that she was weeping, said, "Gertrude, I did not intend my remarks to cause you any discomfort."

"O, no, mother," turning around impulsively and throwing her arms around her mother's neck, "I was only thinking how I wished all girls had as good mothers as I have to instruct and advice them."

"I'm so glad, dear," said Mrs. Stover, planting a kiss on Gertrude's forehead, "that you appreciate my interest and care for you. It amply compensates for my pains. Some girls are indifferent to their mother's advice."

The foregoing dialogue will be sufficient explanation as to why my second effort to establish a correspondence with Gertrude was no more successful than the first. But the beautiful letter, with its smooth style, elegant wording and polite regrets, that she sent me, declining my proposition, served to mollify my disappointment and inspire me with hope.

## CHAPTER IX.

### SOME VISITORS.

A month or so after beginning my studies with Dr. Starr I was standing at the foot of the stairway when Fred passed.

"Hello, Doc," he said, "has there been a fire? Where'd you git them new close? See the dandy necktie! You think you're some punkins, don't you? I heard you had a plug hat, too; you're puttin' on lots of style."

"Say, Fred," said I, "come up into the office."

"What for? I ain't sick. You want to git me up there and give me some of your old pills."

"Come on up," I insisted. "Dr. Starr has gone out into the country; I want to talk to you."

The boy seemed interested and anxious. He evidently thought perhaps I was going to give him an opportunity to make a dime. He was at the top of the stairway before I was; but on entering the office there was a suggestion of of mystery in his expression. There seems to be an atmosphere about a physician's office that strikes the child or the inexperienced with awe. I made some reassuring remarks, but before Fred had regained his normal breathing, I ushered him into the library, motioning him ahead of me. When fairly inside he discovered the skeleton. He shrunk and suddenly stepped back, turning half-way round; but I was between him and the door. There was a mingled smile of fear and resolution depicted on his countenance. He tried to look bold and defiant, but his heart was crowding up against his vocal organs. He said, with a husky voice,

"I know what that is. It's a skeleton."

I laughed heartily and said, "What do you think of it, Fred?"



His shock and embarrassment left him as suddenly as they came and he went to laughing, asking questions and making jocular remarks.

"That thing used to be a man, didn't it?" he commenced, "Where do they git skeletons? Do you know?"

I had to admit that I was unable to tell him. The proverbial expression, "In the regular way," had not yet become familiar to me.

"Golly!" he continued, "It beats the devil, don't it? What long fingers and toes he had. He looks like he's grin-nin' all the time."

Fred stepped round from one side to the other, carefully scrutinizing the skeleton. Pointing to the terminus of the spinal column, he giggled and said,

"Why, Gee-rusalem! he had a little tail, didn't he?"

Footsteps ascending the stairway attracted Fred's attention, and, thinking it was Dr. Starr returning, he popped out into the reception room. Fred was one of those boys who remind one of a wild animal which is always on the alert for enemies, and always changes position on the approach of man. His little every day adventures had created in him a chronic feeling that he was always a subject of rebuke. Whenever he was doing anything out of the ordinary, on the approach of any one his first impulse was to get away or at least change occupation. Repeated guilt makes innocence feel guilty.

"Fred, you needn't leave because I've come," remarked Albert Bruce, as they met at the door.

"O, I've got all the medicine I want; you go in there, Mr. Bruce, and that new doctor'll give you some."

While awaiting Dr. Starr's return, Mr. Bruce engaged me in conversation about the different professions.

"Yes," he said, "you have chosen a most interesting and noble calling; one that will furnish you plenty of thinking and unlimited opportunity to render valuable services to your fellow men. And if you are fortunate in location and



management, the remuneration will be all that you could reasonably desire.

I am glad that you have chosen Dr. Starr for your preceptor, for he is so well qualified to instruct a student and help him along. He is thorough and progressive, yet practical; and also has the deeper and more sincere purposes of his profession at heart, which cannot be said of all the doctors —

"Well, doctor," turning to Dr. Starr, who had just entered the room, "I'm out of patience waiting for you."

"Out of patients! When I get out of patients I shall move to another location, ha! ha!"

Why should people wait for me now, since I've taken in this new partner?" tossing his head at me as he finished the sentence.

"But you know," said Bruce, "people don't like to change doctors."

At this point I wondered if it were not my turn to accuse Dr. Starr of being sarcastic, or was it only a friendly joke?

"I dropped in, Doctor," said Bruce, "to inquire about my friend, John Fealden; I understand you went out to see him to-day."

"Mr. Fealden is getting better. I'm giving him electricity and he is doing well under that treatment."

"Electricity! Do you use that a good deal?"

"Yes, I am getting into the use of it more and more all the time in my practice."

"From the little I know about electricity," said Bruce, "and its effects on the human system, I should think the medical profession would increase their employment of this remedy."

"They are going to. The progressive physicians are learning that electricity is a therapeutic agent that will cure cases that cannot be reached by anything we now have in *materia medica*. We are just beginning to learn how to use it. I predict a wonderful change in the practice of

medicine before the close of the present century. But the advancement will not be confined to the increased use of electricity. Physiologists and pathologists are making investigations and experiments that will throw light on the mysteries of man and reveal many hidden facts concerning pathology and the cause of morbid conditions; and chemists are making analyses in both the mineral and vegetable kingdoms that will result in the introduction of new and useful remedies into our *materia medica*, and these discoveries will bring about a wiser and more scientific system of therapeutics."

"Your remarks interest me very much," said Mr. Bruce. "While I am not a medical student in the strict sense of the word, observation has brought to my mind some ideas on the subject. I would ask you, Doctor, if medicine is practiced as an actual science, or is it largely a matter of experimentation?"

"That is a remarkable question to come from the laity, and from so young a person at that. How dare you be so bold? How about the proverbial saying, 'The doctors know everything?'"

"But," answered Mr. Bruce, "I am conscious of the fact that I am talking with one of the doctors that does not know everything."

"There now, young man, is there no bounds to your audacity?"

"Come, Doctor, no quibbling. If you don't answer my question, we'll be forced to the conclusion that my assertion is true." And Mr. Bruce laughed heartily.

"Well, seriously," said the doctor, "there are some things the doctors know, and some things they don't know. More honesty and a greater amount of diligent study and investigation on the part of the profession would reveal the fact that the doctor is very often not sure of his diagnosis and that he is generally uncertain as to the results of his treat-



ment. But we are advancing. A brighter era in the science of medicine is dawning."

"Yes," remarked Mr. Bruce, "I believe that, but all the sciences are advancing; and I believe that new sciences, or at least new methods of treating semi-scientific subjects, will be introduced before the present generation passes away. There will be an increased amount of thought and energy directed toward qualifying man to have a better understanding of himself and a more rational view of social relations."

"Why, Albert, are you dissatisfied with the human race?"

"No, sir, I am not dissatisfied, but so long as the progressive mind witnesses the sluggishness of the world's moral and mental advancement it must be unsatisfied."

"Along what lines," the doctor asked, "do you expect to stir the world up and reform it?"

Bruce looked the doctor square in the face as if he recognized sarcasm in his question and said:

"I have no intention of becoming a professional reformer, but I think I shall always have ideas on the subject and ever be ready to lend my might in the promotion of any cause that promises a better condition for the race. If there is anything in divine revelation, man is destined to reach a stage of development far beyond what he enjoys to-day. I cannot believe that the All-wise Creator intends the world to remain much longer in its present state of ignorance, misery and unhappiness."

"I see, Albert, that you have great faith in the beneficence of enlightenment. It is encouraging to see so young a man take the position you do; but I would repeat my question: along what special lines will this advancement be made?"

"Now, Doctor, I don't want you to think that I assume to be a teacher on this profound subject. I only have ideas and theories; but," he added, laughingly, "I have great confidence in them."

Isn't it strange that after six thousand years — and we

don't know how much longer — of experience and teaching there should be so much suffering and sin in the world?"

"Well, what do you think is the trouble?"

"Some one," replied Mr. Bruce, "has given, perhaps unconsciously, what I call an epigrammatic answer to the question: 'Man is so soon done for that he don't know what he was begun for.' When we study man's conduct and watch his life through, we naturally come to the conclusion that he thinks he was made exclusively for himself; for his whole aim and actions seem directed toward securing for himself the greatest possible amount of pleasure and enjoyment; yet he fails absolutely in his purpose. This failure is mostly through ignorance of human nature and man's mission; for, what was intended for pleasure is only gratification. The seat of our principal enjoyment and pleasures, is in the mental faculties and all true pleasure is accompanied with reasoning. All others are transitory and misleading. Man has arrived at a pretty fair understanding of right and wrong, and when he comes to a practical acknowledgement that there is more pleasure and happiness in doing right than wrong, the world will have made a great stride toward the millennium."

"Isn't your last asertion generally admitted?"

"Theoretically, it is; but practically, the principle is applied to the other fellow. I believe the enlightened portion of the race is as good and perfect as it can be under the present conditions of society."

"Without objecting to your asertion, I would ask how society is to blame for the sin that is in the world?"

"Society," Mr. Bruce replied, "is in a morbid state. It compels people to act contrary to their convictions. It is tyrannical. It makes cowards of men; it thwarts the ends of justice; it ignores merit and rewards pretense; it gives an erroneous definition of success in life."

Mr. Bruce paused as if waiting for a response. Dr. Starr, leaning back on the legs of his chair, threw his



feet on the corner of the table and began to whittle his finger nails, but his expression showed considerable interest in the conversation. He said,

"Mr. Bruce, you have made some bold assertions; however, some qualifications would, no doubt, relieve them of any color of pessimism. As to society's definition of success in life, I have some thoughts myself on the subject. What do you think is the proper interpretation?" With a smile of gratification, Mr. Bruce said,

"It would grieve me to be reckoned a pessimist on account of my ideas on this subject. When I have answered your question I have explained all my assertions about society. For a man to make a success in life is to fulfill his mission on earth. Now, this involves another question: what is his mission? I believe it is to choose a useful vocation to which he is adapted, and follow it to the best of his ability; not failing, however, to pay reverence to the Creator and devote a portion of his time and energies to the public good. The common laborer or mechanic who earns only a fair living makes as much of a success in life as the man who accumulates millions and builds railroads and steamships. But if there is a man who has made an extraordinary success in life it is the one who has accomplished something especially influential in making the world wiser or better, though he dies poor in worldly possessions. But the popular thing for a man to do in this world is to accumulate wealth, and it doesn't seem to make much difference whether he does it by fair means or foul. Society seems to subordinate everything to this object. I would not be understood as decrying wealth; in proper hands it is a blessing to the world, but it is the perverted use of it and the methods employed for acquiring it that are to be condemned. Man is first a social being, and the possession of wealth is such a potent factor, under present conditions, in commanding the attention of society that the methods used for possessing it are lost sight of. On the other hand, the

reward — in society — for efforts in behalf of humanity and the advancement of the world are very uncertain. This is what I mean by morbid state of society. There are too many persons who make themselves the center, around which their own activities revolve. They are self-seeking, self-indulgent and their only aims and ends are self-aggrandizement."

"Albert," said Dr. Starr, "you evidently have put some thought on this subject. You seem to think there is room for improvement; now, have you any scheme for hastening the arrival of the millennium? A good rule is always to accompany a criticism of existing conditions with a remedy."

"The millennium," said Mr. Bruce, "is coming; the world is constantly growing better, yet I think a brisk agitation occasionally is necessary to throw off lethargy. History shows that these periodical agitations have promoted great strides in the march of reform. I have learned the necessity of precaution in claiming originality, but as to a remedy for prevailing evils, I think we have reason for believing that the next generation will witness the inauguration of a remarkable epoch in human progress. This epoch will be marked with new methods of improvements. Methods that will remove evil by beginning at the roots instead of the branches. To enable man to increase his speed on the road of progress his capacity for being good and doing good must be enlarged. The individual must learn to appreciate as well what is right for himself as for his neighbor. Haven't you noticed that the average person is thoroughly competent to lay out a proper course for others, although his own life may be a constant breaking of the divine commandments?"

We are amply able to distinguish right and wrong, and we all admit that we would enjoy life better and be happier if we always did right, but, as a race we are not capable of putting into practice our better judgment. Our diseased organism renders it impossible. There should be more com-

fort and happiness in the world; and there is going to be. The time is rapidly coming when the thoughtful observer will say the comforts of life outweigh the discomforts; that life for its own sake is worth living. He does not say so now."

The speaker paused, looked at me and then at Dr. Starr, as if expecting, even demanding a response. The doctor sat with a medical journal in his hands thumbing the leaves. He changed the position of his chair, and, smiling, said,

"Albert, you have presented some striking thoughts and made some optimistic predictions and I trust you will be equally happy in proposing remedies for existing evils."

"I only claim," said Mr. Bruce, "the right to some ideas. I think the most plausible, and also a very probable remedy for the world's sluggish march toward the millennium would be to raise up a healthier, stronger and purer race of men and women, which I believe will be introduced during the twentieth century."

"Good morning, Mrs. Kern."

"Good morning, Doctor. I'm glad you are in. I called twice without finding you."

The appearance of Mrs. Judge Kern broke up the conversation and sent me to the library to ponder over bones, processes, condyles, etc.



## CHAPTER X.

### A TALK WITH DR. CLARK.

It was not long after I took up the study of medicine till I imagined I could see that my new plans were bearing fruit. Persons whose social standing was away above mine seemed to take more notice of me and treat me with more respect; but the most flattering of these new relations was the changed attitude toward me of professional men, especially the physicians. This exalted me to the skies. Dr. Clark, one of our prosperous doctors, was unusually sociable and friendly. He made it so pleasant for me that I frequently visited him in his office. His manner was entertaining and seductive. His office rooms were supplied with elegant furniture, and his library, with books bound in the finest leather. I spoke one day of Dr. Starr's having purchased some new books and that he spent all his spare time reading them.

"Yes," said Dr. Clark, "he reads a good deal, but it's not much use. It don't pay to spend very much time with books."

Being somewhat surprised at his remarks, I said, "Why, don't the doctors have to read and keep posted?"

"O, yes, of course they have to keep posted," he said, "but there is an easier way of doing it. If a man graduates from a first class medical college, it don't take very much reading to enable him to make a success of his practice. The people think all doctors learn the same things and are equally well posted, but they believe that some of them are more gifted than others, with the ability to cure diseases. But it's well enough to have plenty of books; it makes a good showing. But don't you know that a large majority of



people think when a man studies medicine, attends medical college, takes lessons in the dissecting room, gets his diploma and opens up an office he is in possession of a wonderful charm; that he is clothed in mysticism and possesses knowledge and power that he cannot be deprived of?"

I had only to recall my own former ideas to acknowledge the credulity of his statement. I spoke of Dr. Starr's advice and suggestions to me in regard to being thorough, and his comments on the necessity of medical men always striving to add to their store of scientific knowledge.

"That's all right," said the doctor, "but what do the people know about the amount of scientific knowledge a doctor possesses? You'll find that while people talk about their favorite doctor being extra well qualified, they really care more for his personal appearance, the way he smiles and shakes hands and the kind of rig he drives than they do about the number of books he reads — or I might say the number of lives he saves."

"But," said I, "won't they finally find out which doctors have the best success with their cases?"

"Those who think might," he said, "but what proportion of the laity are thoughtful on such subjects? Not one in twenty. Then how are the people going to know about these things since the doctors themselves don't know half the time what's the matter with their patients or whether their medicine is going to do any good? By the way, you must remember that this conversation is strictly confidential. We consider you in the profession now and therefore entitled to its secrets. To talk these things on the outside would be a breach of professional ethics."

Coupling these remarks with hints I had picked up around Dr. Starr's office and in certain paragraphs in a work on general practice, I was coming to the conclusion that there were things to learn about the medical profession besides anatomy, physiology, materia medica and therapeutics. Yet I confess that this interview was rather en-

couraging, the reasons for which, the reader will see in future chapters.

My association with Dr. Clark threw me into a dilemma and caused me a season of embarrassment. I became discontented with my situation, yet there was no reason for it that I had the courage to admit. I exercised all my inventive powers trying to devise an excuse for annulling my contract with Dr. Starr, but none seemed tangible. As a matter of fact I was drawn toward Dr. Clark and repelled from Dr. Starr. The former had intimated that it would be agreeable for me to transfer my engagement to him, and I felt that nothing would suit me better, but realized that there was an important obstacle in the way.

My uncle was a zealous admirer of Dr. Starr, and the the contract under which he was to defray my expenses provided that this physician should be my preceptor. Uncle, in keeping with his cautious and systematic methods, had made a written article of agreement between us, and now would he honor the contract if I changed preceptors? I would certainly have to get his consent to do so. For several days I pondered over the question. It occupied my thoughts to the extent of almost entirely stopping my progress in anatomy.

## CHAPTER XI

### TAKING FRED FOR A BUGGY RIDE.

I contemplated an easy time and yet rapid progress with Dr. Clark, but I knew it would require a positive influence to induce my uncle to consent to the change. Early in my search for that influence, I thought of the intrepid and resourceful Fred. So, on a Saturday evening I managed to see him and said, "Fred, wouldn't you like to take a buggy ride tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow? What time?"

"In the forenoon," I said, having another engagement in the afternoon.

"I'd like awful well to go, but I intended to go to Sunday school in the forenoon."

"O, you're a Sunday school boy, are you? Do you go regularly?"

"Yes, when there ain't nothin' better goin' on."

"Do you like to go?" I asked.

"Yes, I like to go to Sunday school."

"What do you go for, to learn, or because others go?"

"To learn, of course. I like to learn about the prophets and the Jews and the Pharisees and Daniel in the lion's den and Jonah swallowin' the whale and the children of Israel prowlin' round so long in the wilderness; and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — say! wasn't Jacob a dandy to fool the old man so slick with that goat skin?"

I warned the boy that his remarks were bordering on the sacreligious, and he said, "All right, but what's that got to do with the buggy ride? But say! ain't there as much sac-religion in buggy ridin' at Sunday school time as there is in talkin' about funny things in the Bible?"



"I guess so," said I, "but what about the buggy ride?"

"Where are you goin' and what do you want me to go for?"

I didn't exactly like the question, for it indicated that Fred had suspicions of an ulterior motive; but after assuring him that his company was the incentive and that our conveyance would be one of the finest buggies in the livery barn, with a fast team, he became much interested.

"Why can't we wait till in the afternoon? You see I'd like awful well to go to Sunday school tomorrow; for the lesson's about Daniel bein' cast into the lion's den, and our teacher says she's goin' to tell us a good story. She told us a mighty good one when 'Joseph sold into Egypt' was the lesson. Did you ever read about that?"

Before he finished the question his face began to wrinkle and a mischievous sparkle was in his eye. He laughed heartily, expecting, of course, that I would think of the "Joseph" incident in Albert Bruce's class.

"Say, Reub," he went on, "layin' all jokes aside, do you s'pose Joseph would have bellered so when his brothers throwed him into the pit if he'd knowed what a big fat job he was goin' to git on account of it, down in Egypt?"

"I suppose not, but what's that got to do with our buggy ride?"

"Well, I'll go if you'll wait till afternoon."

I concluded to let him have his way, therefore we started on our ride in the afternoon with clear consciences.

I chose this plan for pleasing Fred, for I knew that he was a great horse fancier. There was nothing that he delighted in so much as to spin over the road in a nice buggy behind a span of handsome fast trotters; and this was just the kind of a rig we had on this beautiful April morning, for I had ordered the best one in the barn — I did not realize the expense; my uncle's money was paying my bills.

After driving a few miles, when Fred was in the height

of his enjoyment, with the lines in his hands, I said:

"Fred, you and I have always been good friends, and I've found you to be a pretty sharp fellow. I always speak a good word for you because I believe you can always be trusted and depended on. And now, I want to ask a favor of you."

He looked askance at me. There was a dubious blush in his face; I didn't know whether it meant approbation or suspicion. He was enrapt in the business of sending the spirited sorrels over the turnpike at their utmost speed, but he condescended to say, "O now, you're givin' me taffy."

"No," said I, "I mean business; and I'll make it all right with you."

At these words he pulled on the lines, put the whip in the socket and said, "Well, what is it? I'm in for anything that ain't too dangerous to my reputation. My Sunday school teacher said a feller's good name is the most valuable thing he has and I don't want to git mine damaged."

"I'll tell you Fred what I want you to do; I want to change preceptors —"

"Preceptors! what's that? I don't believe I've got any to swop with you."

"I mean," said I, "change doctors to study medicine with. You see, my uncle David is furnishing the money to pay the expenses of my medical course; he's stuck on Dr. Starr, but I'd rather study with Dr. Clark. I'm afraid uncle won't agree to the change, and now, I want you to help me change his mind on the subject."

"You must think," said Fred, "that I have lots of influence with them big rich fellers like I had with the railroads —"

"Look out there! where 're you going? Gee!"

Being convulsed at his own repartee, Fred gave an uneven pull on the lines, the team was off the road and the buggy in danger of being tipped over, but my timely grabbing of the lines saved us.

"Now, Fred," I continued, "if you'll carry out my instructions I think I'll succeed in my scheme —"

"O, you just want me to lèg for you."

"When you get a chance," I commenced again, "without arousing any suspicion, I want you to tell Uncle that you heard Dr. Starr say he was the biggest crank he ever saw and that he wouldn't believe him under oath."

Fred assumed a meditative air and appeared to be studying the swelling buds on the trees, then broke out:

"What if he asks me who he said it to? I don't want to git into any scrape with Dr. Starr; he might make a skeleton of me, and hang me up in his office for folks to fool with and make fun of."

"You will tell Uncle it was some one you didn't know; but I don't believe he will ever say a word to Dr. Starr about it."

I was sincere in this assertion, for my uncle was one of those dignified, very independent men who treat ordinary offenses with silent contempt.

"Well," said Fred, "I guess we can work the thing all right, but what am I goin' to git out of it? You know, a feller ought to have purty good pay for riskin' his reputation to help another feller out."

For a moment this seemed a disagreeable question, but I succeeded in curbing my conscience, and handed Fred a dollar and said, "Now, if the plan works all right I'll give you some more; and then when you get ready to study medicine I may be able to do something for you."

"Study medicine! You'll never ketch me in that business."

"Why, don't you think you'd like to be a doctor?"

"N-a-w; I wouldn't like to go round sick folks of all kinds and dishin' out pills and powders to 'em. I'd ruther be a lawyer if I was goin' to be anything."

"You think," said I, "you would like to be a lawyer?"

"Yes, sir, that'd suit me better 'an anything. And then



there's more money in it than there is in doctorin'. Why, I heard Pa read in the newspaper about a lawyer chargin' fifteen hundred dollars for one case. I'll bet you never heard of a doctor gittin' that much out of one case. Then, I think it'd jist be fun to go into a law suit and tangle up the witnesses like I've seen lawyers; and scheme round and beat the other lawyer."

This manifestation of Fred's keen power of observation, talent for strategem and comprehension of the battle of life was encouraging to me. It increased my faith in his ability "to work the thing all right." And I had to wait only a few days to see my faith justified; for, in a couple of weeks after the buggy ride our scheme, with a few changes of detail, was consummated and I found myself snugly ensconced in Dr. Clark's office.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A VISIT TO A COUNTRY PATIENT.

The change of preceptors seemed to complete my happiness for the present. I was now associated with a more congenial spirit and knew that my medical course would be shortened and attended with more entertainment and less mental work. I enjoyed sitting in a nicely carpeted office, with handsome furniture, ornamental window blinds and lace curtains. Dr. Clark kept his books in the reception room where everybody could see them. He had less regard, however, for the quality and date of his medical works than for the binding and case he kept them in. His bookcase was of polished black walnut, ornamented with fancy moulding and carving. The chairs, besides their exquisite beauty, were a delight to the lover of lazy luxury.

One agreeable feature of my new situation was that Dr. Clark was less conventional about his office and practice than my former preceptor. I was allowed to know more of the secrets and mysteries connected with his professional work. These things are often very interesting and sometimes sensational in the eyes of an unsophisticated youth.

The doctor often took me with him on his professional visits. When I had been with him two weeks I accompanied him to see a patient seven miles in the country. It was a proud moment of my life, when, perched alongside of Dr. Clark, in the finest buggy that ever tracked the streets of Hamburg, I sailed out of the town at a three minute gait behind the doctor's stylish dapple grays. My head was a few degrees more erect than usual, and I tried to assume an independent, indifferent air, but could not help casting an eye from side to side as we went down Main street, to see

how much attention we were attracting and what particular persons were looking at me. I only regretted that the Stover residence was not on our route.

It took only thirty-five minutes to leave the seven miles behind us. When within two hundred yards of the large, one story, hewed log house which was the patient's home, we were discovered by the children who were playing in the door yard. A twelve year old, barefooted girl, after craning her neck and gazing a moment to be sure of the object, made a bolt for the house, her long, flaxen hair floating horizontally on the breeze. She was followed by two bare-headed boys. Another girl emerged from behind a gooseberry bush and started for the side door, but she made the mistake of Lot's wife — as she looked back she stumbled and fell on her face. As we approached the front gate the third boy came into view; he jumped off the hen house and ran to the door, yelling "The doctor's come." The other children evidently had preceded him in this announcement. At the words, "the doctor's come," a little four year old chap down in the corner of the yard raised his prostrate form from the grass, took one hurried look at us and then, screaming at the top of his voice, got to the house as quickly as his little fat legs could carry him.

As we passed through the gate a large yellow dog in the backyard discovered us and, with bristles raised and blood in his eye, came bounding to the front, challenging our rights on the premises. His coarse, savage growl attracted the attention of an aged black cur lying under a shade tree. This old fellow, too feeble to be much concerned about the troubles of this world, only raised his head, gave one hoarse bark and then dropped his chin to the ground again.

The doctor, being accustomed to such experience, was not uneasy, but I was terrified. My mind flashed over a list of awful possibilities,— torn trousers, lacerated flesh, disfigured features, hydrophobia! But this terrible agony did not last long. Mrs. Grimes, suddenly protruding her



head through the side door, yelled in an authoritative tone, "You, Dash! behave yourself. Come on in, he won't hurt you."

This was enough. The dog raised his head, wagged his tail and marched quietly to the house. His kindly expression showed that he was only intending to do his duty.

When I saw that the impending danger was removed I drew a full breath and looked toward the house; there were two windows full of faces. Each window contained six panes of glass, through nearly every one of which was an anxious pair of eyes gazing at us; there was also a face in the door, which stood ajar. As we entered the house, the children, seven in number, retreated to remote parts of the room, some going into the kitchen and peeping round the door casings.

"Good morning," said Dr. Clark.

"Howdy" and "Good mornin'" were the responses from four women. An invitation from one of them to "Have a cheer and set down," indicated which was the lady of the house.

"I'm awful glad you've come, Doctor," commenced Mrs. Grimes, for Sarah Jane's a mighty sick gal. She's been sufferin' an awful sight of misery these two days now."

"What seems to be the trouble?" inquired the doctor. He approached the bedside and laid his finger on the wrist of a pale, slender young woman nineteen years old.

"Why," said the mother, "she was took with a kind o' fainty spell when she come in from milkin' day before yisterday evenin'; and I rubbed her forehead with camfire and put a warm cloth to her stomic, and in a little while she said she felt tolable well; but she didn't git no rest all night and in the mornin' when she got up she had the headache and said she felt as weak as a kitten. But still she didn't 'pear to have any particular disease, and so I just thought I could doctor her myself, so I goes to work and made her some strengthenen tea and give her. But Sarah

Jane hain't been strong for some time anyhow. She gits kind o' dumpish every once in awhile."

"What did you make the tea of?" the doctor asked.

"Why, I took a handful of horsemint leaves and half a handful of peppermint and a few pieces of yaller coon root and biled 'em together fifteen minutes in rain water and strained it, then I took a handful of tansy and a little bone-set and some prickly ask bark and about the same of elder blossoms and a teacupful of dogwood bark and biled 'em twenty minutes and strained 'em, than I biled the strainin's of both together down to half the bulk and give her a table-spoonful every hour all day and away into the night."

When Mrs. Grimes stopped to catch her breath, the doctor said, "It's a wonder Sarah Jane didn't die before you got the medicine prepared," but noticing from Mrs. Grimes' expression that this bit of sarcasm was a little offensive to her, he promptly added, "That's a fine compound, Mrs. Grimes; it evidently did the patient lots of good."

"Yes, there's no use o' talkin', them's powerful good medicines. And I know it helped her, but still the poor gal didn't seem to git along. She kept gittin' weaker."

"Are you a doctor, too?"

"I'm getting ready to be one." I had noticed the neighbor woman who asked this question, scanning me curiously.

"It beats all," she continued, how smart young folks are gettin' nowadays. The boys ain't skercely out o' their petticoats till they want to be doctors or lawyers or preachers or somethin' big; and the gals, they begin to want beaux and pianers purty soon after they're weaned."

Mrs. Grimes went on, "So I thought I'd try somethin' more stimulat'in' so I made a strong tea of ginger and kian pepper and mixed whiskey with it half and half, and had her to drink a pint of it in the course of an hour or sich a matter."

"What effect did that have?" inquired the doctor.

"Well, it seemed to liven her up considerable and make



her feel better for a while, but after that she got weaker 'an ever and kind o' stupid like, and then by and by she got deathly sick. I knowed there was somethin' in her that ought to come out, so I give her a big dose of lobelia and ground mustard seed mixed."

"How did that effect her?" the doctor asked.

"O my! but she did heave up and sweat. She said she thought she was goin' to turn wrong side out. Now, mind you, I had been rubbin' her forehead with camfire and layin' hot cloths to her stomick and puttin' mustard plasters to the bottoms of her feet most of the time 'cause she had a terrible headache and then — why —" turning to me, "Did you say you was a doctor?"

Dr. Clark took the hint and said, "Reub, I wish you'd go out and see if our team is standing all right."

I was no slower than the doctor taking the hint, and immediately repaired to the door yard to give the woman a chance to say the things that might have been embarrassing to a young man. In a few minutes the doctor came to the door and asked me to bring in his instrument case from the buggy. I obeyed orders and the first thing he did for the patient was to bleed her, drawing a quart of the crimson, vital fluid from a vein in her arm. But I would have to stretch my conscience to put the usual embellishment on this blood-letting story as it is told now-a-days, viz: "When the vein was cut the blood struck the ceiling." A few minutes after the operation the patient fainted. The doctor hastily gave her brandy and had her breathe the fumes of aqua ammonia. When she revived he prepared several powders composed of quinine and calomel and a few others of jalap, aloes, leptandra, colocynth, gamboge and scammony, giving verbal directions for taking. He then placed on the table a bunch each of the following roots: *Serpentaria*, *hydrastis*, *rhubarb*, *styllingia* and *sanguinaria*, adding a quantity of the following barks: *Peruvian*, wild cherry and prickly ash and also some quassia chips; he directed the



roots to be boiled a half hour in a gallon of water and the barks to be soaked in rain water twelve hours, the liquid of both to be strained and mixed. The directions for this were half a teacupful every three hours.

Now, I beg of the modern physician, who happens to read this report, to be charitable and not think I am presuming on his credulity, when I say that this patient recovered; she actually did get well.

"Yes," said I, in discussing the prognosis of the case on our way home, "if there is any virtue in variety, Sarah Jane ought to get well."

The doctor looked around at me, and with a significant smile said: "The successful practitioner of medicine has many things to take into consideration besides diagnosis, pathology and therapeutics. He is supposed primarily, of course, to be concerned about and devote his thoughts to the interest and welfare of his patients, but he should not lose sight of the fact that self-preservation is the first law of nature. He must learn how to treat patronage as well as patients. There is nothing that wins friendship and patronage like flattery. People hate flattery, you know, yet there is nothing else they love and relish so well. You noticed, of course, the inclination of that patient's mother and friends to be always doing a whole lot for her. Evidently those people believe in heroic treatment. Then do you suppose they would have been pleased with my prescribing only three or four remedies, and moderation in my prognosis?"

I thought it was strange, but only assented to the wisdom of Dr. Clark's policy.

"No, sir," said he, "they probably would have been dissatisfied and concluded that I didn't realize the gravity of the case and sent for another doctor. I have studied human nature somewhat, and I am ready to say that there is no fact in the human mind more prominent than the imperfectness of humanity, yet there is nothing that is so quick to provoke resentment at criticism of one's actions; and on

the other hand, nothing is more pleasing to a man than the approbation of his fellows. People do enjoy having their opinions on important matters confirmed. One of the common incidents of a physician's life is, when he is called to see a patient and expresses an opinion or makes a statement of the case, for some one — generally a woman — to say, with a gratified expression: "That's just what I thought;" or, turning to some one present: "There, now, don't you remember I told you so?" "Of course," the doctor went on, "after a physician is well established and his superior ability becomes a household word in the community, he don't have to take so much pains to gratify the people's conceit."

"Yes," said I, "I notice that Dr. Starr is very independent as to the opinions of his customers concerning their cases."

The doctor looked at me with an expression of surprise mingled with contempt, and opened his mouth to speak, but suddenly turned and tapped the horses with the whip, which increased their speed to such a degree as to furnish a new topic of conversation.

## CHAPTER XIII. . .

### MEDITATING.

Dr. Clark was a very satisfactory preceptor and companion. I often contrasted him with my former preceptor. He did not annoy me with constant anxiety concerning my progress and thoroughness as Dr. Starr did. I spent a pleasant summer in my new quarters. My enjoyment, however, was not derived so much from present experiences as from anticipations of the future. Yet I had easy times, wore the best clothes of any young man in Jamburg, had some spending money, and was moving in good society. I tried to conclude that I was perfectly happy. Why shouldn't I be? My present situation and future prospects were much better than I could have hoped for two years ago. I sat at the window holding communion with myself. I am a superior young man with a great future before me. That load of wheat moving up the street represented days of hard toil at seeding time, exhausting perspiration in the harvest field, and suffocating dust around the threshing machine. But three years ago — just think of it! I was situated as is the driver of the team that is hauling it to market — a common farmer's son, a plodding tiller of the soil. And that young carpenter, bending under his burden, is transferring his kit of tools to another job — see! he changes it to the other shoulder to rest. Poor souls! there isn't much for them in the world; not much for them to live for. They have no ambition to be anything but common folk. As I sat that afternoon gazing at the representatives of many occupations wending their way on the streets I wondered at the low idea of life entertained by the average human being, and why his aspirations were so low.



Why didn't people prepare themselves for high and honorable positions and acquire fame? I thought the only explanation was in the old adage, "It takes all kinds of people to make a world."

But before the sun went down the trend of my meditations had changed. It had been the desire and expectation of my life to be happy, but the following lines falling under my observation on turning the leaves of a volume of poems, caused me to wonder if my aspirations and plans would not lead me to the opposite condition. Were not wealth and fame incompatible with happiness?

"Sweet are the thoughts that savor of content:  
The quiet mind is richer than a crown;  
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent,  
The poor estate scorns fortune's angry crown."

I had never read much poetry, but I had gotten the idea that poets were inspired, therefore infallible; then contentment was essential to happiness; therefore if I was to be happy, what would become of my aspirations? I certainly was far from contentment. I was impatient to acquire a medical education. Then a desirable location must be secured. But an important financial problem confronted me. The contract with my uncle would end with my medical course; then where was the means to come from to procure an outfit to begin practice with and support me until my business became remunerative? I could not think for a moment of returning to manual labor or any kind of wage earning to raise a stake after having assumed the exalted position I would occupy after graduating from a medical college. I had set a lofty standard for my career and shrank from the idea of dropping below it in any respect whatever. My sphere was always to be above anything common.

To make these plans harmonize with my circumstances was a question of great moment. It gave me no little anxiety and worry. I went to bed that night with a feverish brain.

But beyond this embarrassment was another matter of equal importance and greater delicacy; one that revolved in my mind very tenderly. It was not to be discussed even with my most confidential friends. It was almost sacred enough to be a secret to myself; yet it was a question not to be disregarded. How was I to meet the proverbial idea that a physician, in order to be popular and prosperous, must be a married man. I had heard it said that the unmarried doctor had a hard struggle to make a living. I had heard a good old matron say that she considered a single man who undertook to practice medicine, an abnormity. I allowed this matter to have a depressing influence on me, even though the time when I would be directly and materially affected by it was a long way off. My ideal was set. To complete my course and become established without hindrance was my unchangeable plan. I had a secret reason for not wanting any financial embarrassment to interfere with this plan. Not only had I been convinced that the married state was the most conducive to a physician's success, but that the degree of prosperity this condition brought him, depended on certain characteristics of his wife; that the success of many was owing to their wives' ability to draw patronage. The wife should be a woman of great force of character, possess the qualities of popularity, and understand the art of putting people under obligation to herself and husband without creating any suspicion of designing. She should, withal, be active and constantly on the alert in the interest of her husband's business. If she be handsome and capable of displaying excellent taste in dress, so much the better.

This new line of thought became exceedingly interesting to me; and moreover, I knew where there was just such a person as described above — a young lady whom I thought reflected all these qualities. And my judgment was not based alone on my own observation. Others estimated her as highly as I did. I had heard Albert Bruce, who was



noted for good judgment and taste, make remarks about her that fully justified my opinion. But just when I was becoming enraptured with sweet imaginations in connection with this very interesting subject, my mind dropped on to a thought, a question that was not altogether new to me: what were the relations between this young lady and Robert Holmes? Were they carrying on a correspondence? I had tried to find out, but was unsuccessful. It was a matter of supreme importance to me. If my suspicions were well founded I must act at once. I would act anyhow. I began to consider methods for accomplishing my purpose. Could I secure the services of my old partner? He was dissatisfied with the remuneration the last time I had employed him to help me; but perhaps by some special attention and flattery I could use him again. So I managed to get him into the office one day when Dr. Clark was gone to the country.

"Fred," said I, "what do you calculate to do for a livelihood? You'd better make up your mind to study medicine; I believe you would be a good, successful doctor."

"Yes, but don't you know, I said I was going to be a lawyer? They're the fellows that make the money and have good times."

"But the doctor's business is more interesting than the lawyers. Wouldn't you like to learn all about people, their diseases, the many peculiar, strange things about them and how the human body works?"

"That'd be all right, but I guess the lawyers learn some funny things about people, too." Fred rolled his eyes across the bookcase and added, "I've seen more'n one doctor book myself."

I took down a book and by showing certain illustrations and paragraphs, got him very much interested. Dr. Clark had deviated from the regular, systematic course as a preceptor and given me lessons quite early that properly



belonged to the latter part of the course; among which were instructions on some striking features of the nervous system. I knew I could give Fred a rich entertainment along this line:

"Fred," I commenced, "you've learned something about telegraphing and electricity when you've been about the depot; isn't it interesting?"

"Yes, but that lob that's workin' there now won't 'low any boys in the office 'cept on business."

"Do you know," I resumed, "that you have a complete telegraph system, with wires, batteries, offices and operators in your body?"

"A-h, now Doc, what 'r you givin' me? I should think it'd make me run like lightning, if I had."

"That is no joke or sell, Fred; I can prove it to you."

"Well, all right, present your evidence to the jury."

I began, "Now, you know the feeling is all in the nerves."

"Yes, that's what they say, but what's that got to do with the telegraph wires; I saw one of the linemen cut a wire in two yesterday, but it didn't squeal."

"You just wait till I explain."

"All right, go ahead."

"A person's brain," I continued, "controls everything—"

"It depends," Fred interrupted, "a good deal on what kind of a brain a person's got whether he can control things or not."

"Now, if you'll keep still I'll make it plain to you: All the nerves are connected with the brain, and we'll call the brain the operator and the nerves the wires. For instance, you are an operator in Philadelphia and you want me to send you a box of apples like those on that table; you put your finger to the key and notify me by sending a dispatch along the wire, the operator, or brain, here in Jamburg, receives it, gives it to me and I go to work and fill the order. On the other hand, supposing you eat one of the apples; as soon as it touches the inside of your stomach the

mucous membrane sends notice of the fact along the nerve to the brain, then the brain telegraphs back to the glands of the stomach to secrete gastric juice to digest it with. To make it still plainer; supposing a mosquito lights on a young lady's hand and sticks his bill into the skin, the brain is notified through the nerve, and it telegraphs to the muscles of the arm to contract and scare the mosquito away."

"But," Fred promptly asked, "where's the operator that sends the news to the brain?"

This question was somewhat puzzling. I hesitated. Fred noticed my embarrassment and chuckled; but a happy thought let me out.

"Why, you see," I explained, "this is a case where a regular operator isn't necessary. The mosquito itself turns on the alarm and the news is carried along the nerve to the brain."

"Oh yes," said Fred, "just like they do in Philadelphia when there's a fire and they want to send word to the fire company — I've been there and seen 'em do it."

"Yes, that's it," I said.

"Well," said Fred, "I'll bet if I was the moskeetur I wouldn't turn on the alarm till I got a belly full of good blood."

Fred seemed so well pleased and entertained that I concluded the point had been reached for the introduction of my purpose.

"Fred," I began, "are you going to the show that's advertised for next Monday?"

"You mean the slight-o'-hand performance?"

"Yes."

"I do' no. I'd like to. 'Cordin' to the bills they're goin' to do some awful strange things."

"Have you got the money to pay for a ticket?"

"No, not yet."

"Fred," said I, "you and I have always been good

friends, and now I want to ask a favor of you; and if you'll grant it I'll give you the money to take you into the show."

The boy's countenance brightened as he answered: "All right. I'll do it if its anything reasonable. What is it?"

"I want you to find out whether Bob Holmes is corresponding with Gertrude Stover. Now, of course you understand this is a profound secret."

Fred sat leaning on the table making unintelligible marks with a pencil, as if figuring out the problem.

"Well," he said, "how do you want me to proceed?"

"I'll just let you pursue your own course. You are sharp enough to work it through all right."

"All right," he replied, "I'll see what I can do."

In a few days Ferd entered the office with an expression of satisfaction and victory beaming from his round, good natured face.

"Well, Fred," I greeted him, "what's the news? You look happy; I don't suppose you've lost any friends or met with any misfortune."

"Why, I've got some good news. I've found out about that matter."

It might not have shown so plainly on me, but my face, too, evidently beamed forth delight and gratification. I was happy in the anticipation of a good report from Fred. Plans for action began at once to form themselves in my mind. After waiting as long as my patience would permit, I asked, "Well, what is the result of your investigation?"

"I've done the work I agreed to," said Fred, "and now I want my pay."

I felt rich enough just then to liquidate any amount of indebtedness. I handed him a dollar and after waiting a few moments with increased anxiety, said, "Well, how is it?"

"How's what?"

"Why, about the correspondence?"

"O, I didn't agree to tell you that."

"You didn't? I'd like to know why. What did I give



you that dollar for?" My voice had become somewhat subdued.

"Why," said Fred, with forced solemnity, "I only agreed to find out about it. That's all you asked me to do; and if you want to know the rest you'll have to give me another dollar."

He was persistent in his demands. I was on the point of being cross to him, when I realized that he had me tricked, and then I couldn't help admiring the boy's cunning — it was worth all he asked for it, so I gave him another dollar. It was no hardship for me to do this, for the day before, my uncle gave me a draft.

Fred was now in one of his very happy moods, and in a long, humorous story, he told how he ascertained that Robert and Gertrude were not carrying on a correspondence. Of course, this put me in a happy mood, too; but it did not continue so very long.

A continuous cloudy sky and a damp, chilly October atmosphere is never conducive to cheerfulness, but when a high minded, yet dependent young man, already blue from discouragement, is enveloped in such elements he is very liable to become despondent.

As I walked to my dinner one day, breathing the bleak breeze off the Alleghanies, my mind was occupied musing over the fact that life's path is not strewn altogether with roses. The sharpest thorn in my path at this time was a warning from my uncle that I need not expect drafts from him so frequently in the future as they had been coming. He said I had been overestimating his generosity; and even intimated that if I continued to display such flagrant evidence of inexcusable extravagance, he would take advantage of a certain clause in our contract, and withhold his support altogether. But how could I curtail my expenditures and yet keep up personal appearances and maintain the social standing I had acquired? Would it do for me to secure a cheaper boarding house, allow my wardrobe to

decline, limit my livery bills, join excursion parties less frequently and quit puffing the fragrant Havana? Perish the thought! Here was a problem, and its solution was imperative.

According to present plans it would be two and a half years before I would be in a position to earn a living; and I reasoned thus: in the first place, it would be an unbearable time to wait, and to go on to that time under the financial restraint which would be necessary, was out of the question. It would subject me to excruciating humility, and humility was a thing I had learned to abhor. And even if I should decide to do as many medical students do, go into practice after taking only one course of lectures, I would yet have a year and a half of preparation before me. Even this would outstretch my patience and finances — allowing that I would not submit to the suggested detestable economy. Something must be done; I was in trouble. I could not read, I could only hold the book open and look on the pages. There was no one I felt like communicating with on the subject. Finally I found comfort in my own imaginations; while sitting in the office that gloomy afternoon a happy thought came into my mind. I would get ready at once and go to college. The announcements that Dr. Clark had received showed that the terms for 1869 and 1870 would begin in about a week. I would return in March with a full course of medical lectures in my head; and as there was no law in the western states regulating the practice of medicine, I would take Horace Greeley's advice, go west in the spring, put out my shingle and grow up with the country.

This would make me comparatively independent of my uncle's restrictions, for I would thus be able to relinquish my claims on him so much earlier than was originally planned, that he would not complain of extravagance.

These thoughts so titillated my pride that I actually got up and danced on the floor. But in the midst of my exulta-

tions these questions presented themselves: can I manage to matriculate, since the college I have chosen requires evidence of having studied medicine constantly for at least a year and a half with a reputable physician? And then, would my uncle consent to my launching, unprepared, into a profession of so much importance and responsibility? I concluded at once that the solution of the first question depended on my preceptor, and observation had already furnished evidence to convince me that his conscience was sufficiently elastic to enable him to render efficient service in this case; therefore I lost no time in revealing my plans to him, and asking him if he would give me a certificate to the effect that I had been studying medicine constantly a year and a half. At first he objected, and his principal objection was somewhat flattering to me, since it was on account of his desire to keep me with him as long as possible for the sake of my agreeable companionship. But a little reasoning brought him to a satisfactory agreement.

Now my obliging, generous uncle was to be attended to; but his conscience being of a different type, his management would require different tactics. But with the assistance of Dr. Clark, and by withholding part of the plan — leading him to believe that a term of lectures in so early a period of my course was only a matter of choice, and that I would afterwards continue my studies before attempting to go into practice, I succeeded in securing a draft to defray the expenses of a term of lectures.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### AT MEDICAL COLLEGE.

A greater degree of happiness than I experienced on that bright October day, sitting at the car window as the east bound train pulled out of Jamburg, is seldom realized. I had shaken hands with several friend on the platform and was now answering the salutations of men and boys and the handkerchief waves of the young ladies. We arrived in Philadelphia at two-thirty P. M., and fifteen minutes later I alighted from a hack at the door of Jefferson Medical College. When my turn came I presented my credentials and was enrolled as a student.

The letter from my preceptor read as follows:

“————— M. D.,

Dean of Jefferson Medical College,

Dear Doctor:—This will introduce to you Reuben Fussanfeathers, an enthusiastic medical student who has been studying under my supervision for the past eighteen months. Any special favors you may see fit to confer on him will be highly appreciated by me and remembered by him.”

This proved satisfactory and I was exceedingly gratified and relieved of a fear that a scholarship examination would be required.

The enrollment was unusually large and everything started off in a satisfactory manner. I soon found that listening to lectures in a hall full of students was a pleasanter occupation than reading medical works alone in an office. Acquiring knowledge by absorption — endosmosis, as medical students sportively call it — was more compatible with my disposition than searching for it in books.

I spent a good deal of time in the anatomical museum, looking at the monstrosities, examples of morbid anatomy and peculiar surgical specimens.

No other department of a medical college attracts such general attention nor creates so much general interest as the clinical, especially the surgical branch of it. The managers know that their reputation and patronage depend largely on the extensiveness of this department.

Our surgeon, Dr. Fibula, had a national reputation, and no one could have been surprised at this after seeing him with the clinics before the class. He was famous for original operations, and was as original and dexterous in wielding his tongue as the scalpel. While his explanations and descriptions were clear and concise, couched in language that was strong, yet charming, he would relieve the sadness and shock of a serious case with witticisms that evoked laughter from the friends and spectators. We had all kinds of clinics. Some that were pathetic and heart-rending, others that were comical and ridiculous. At one time you would laugh and at another time, faint.

I well remember one of those original operations; it was for straightening a very crooked femur bone in a boy fourteen years old. The boy complained that the deformity, which was caused by imperfect union of a fracture, interfered with his enjoyment of life, especially the sports of boyhood. Therefore he was determined to have it remedied if it could possibly be done. Dr. Fibula, after studying the case a whole day finally decided on a plan for the operation. After describing the proposed experiment to the class, admitting the uncertainty of success, he told the patient, who was sitting on the operating table, to lie down; the order was obeyed, but just before the anaesthetic reached his nose, the plucky boy raised up, cast his eyes over the audience and exclaimed, in loud, clear tones, "Now gentlemen, for a straight leg or a dead boy."



The operation was successful, and a few years later this boy joined the United States army.

A woman who had been blind for several years was presented to the class to be operated on for artificial pupil. She had arrived at the age when females are vulgarly called old maids, but was yet unmarried. When the effects of the anaesthetic had reached the stage of intoxication, she sang in a voice that was heard all over the hall, two verses of the hymn beginning, "This is the way I long have sought and mourned because I found it not."

At the close of this operation, which showed good evidence of success, a lady friend who accompanied the patient, remarked, "Doctor, I want to compliment you on your ability as an operator on the eye."

"Thank you," said Dr. Fibula, "I modestly admit that I possess some skill in this line, but I spoiled a bushel of eyes learning."

The last six weeks of the term were devoted largely to the study of practical anatomy in the dissecting room, and I had been looking forward to this with considerable interest.

The dissecting material had been secured and at the close of the lectures in the afternoon the dean of the faculty instructed all the second course students to prepare for this special work by providing themselves with the necessary instruments and organizing into classes of five each and electing a foreman for each class.

The cadavers were lying on the tables and the janitor placed tickets with numbers corresponding with those on the tables in a box, and had each foreman draw a subject for his class. This was rendered necessary on account of the lack of uniformity in the value of the dissecting material. After these ceremonies had been observed, the students repaired to the large hall where this new work was in readiness for them. While I was only a first course student, and really had no right there, my curiosity impelled me to go with the crowd.



It was a jolly, hilarious, expectant lot of students that left the amphitheater on the second floor, but a much more serious one that entered the dissecting room on the fourth floor. It was altogether new experience to all but eight or ten of the one hundred and thirty. They cracked many rude jokes at one another and displayed all manner of levity as they wended their way through the halls and up the spiral stairway, but as they approached their destination the atmosphere seemed to take on a sombre hue. It was more like a funeral procession now. Each student was drawing a shocking picture on the canvas of his imagination, wondering what the scene would be like. They were disappointed; instead of the withering scene of twenty-six naked dead human bodies, twenty-six clean, white sheets, spread over as many narrow, blue tables met their eyes as they entered the room. And they were allowed the privilege of standing by in free contemplation; thus giving their minds time to adjust themselves to the situation before uncovering the subjects of their scientific research.

It is remarkable how quickly medical students get used to this strange experience. There is never but one shock. After the first day's work the sensation is no greater than it would be on visiting a pork packing establishment. To make the first cut on a fresh subject is a severe trial for some. I have often seen all the five members of a class standing, with scalpel in hand, each asking some other one to make the beginning, as if the first cut would draw blood and cause the subject to rise up and protest; and finally the demonstrator of anatomy would be called on to break the ice — or skin, rather.

The work on the cadaver is divided as follows: Two students dissect an arm each and an upper fourth of the body; two others, a leg each and a lower fourth of the body; and the fifth one takes the head and neck. But of course they all have the privilege of studying the entire subject. After the work of dissecting commenced it was easy to un-

derstand the necessity of distributing the material by chance; for while some of the subjects were perfect, others were in a very unsatisfactory condition from a superabundance of adipose tissue, disagreeable state of decay or some other circumstance. The freer the body is from fat the easier the various tissues can be dissected and examined. A singular and rather sad coincidence was the fact that it fell to the lot of the only woman in the class, a refined, middle aged lady, to dissect the head and neck of a beautiful child about five years old; but after the preliminary hesitation and the first incision, she went about the work with as little trepidation as she would in dressing a chicken.

## CHAPTER XV.

### AN EPISODE.

Some incidents occurred in connection with the dissecting department that shows the power surprise may exert over the human mind.

From some cause or other one of the classes had to wait a few days for their cadaver after the dissecting room had been opened, and two members of this class, Cubeb and Hemlock, being extremely anxious to begin this new work, succeeded, by bribing the janitor, in getting the key to the room on Saturday night, their material having been placed in position during the day. It was against the rules to work in the dissecting room on Saturday night, therefore the boys had to steal their way in. They meandered up one stairway after another, and through the dark halls, their footsteps growing softer and softer as they approached their destination on the fourth floor. Their principal dread was the possibility of attracting the attention of Dr. Carr, the professor of chemistry, who slept in a room on the third floor. The students all stood in awe of this very dignified old gentleman. Decorum was his hobby and every rude act witnessed, gave him pain. Reaching the floor of the dissecting room, the boys listened. Evidently no work was going on inside, but a noise further up the hall on the left startled them. Their breathing was depressed but their heart-beats resembled the galloping of horses on a soft road. The noise continued; it sounded like bones gently striking on the bare floor; in fact it was rats plundering some fresh bones that had carelessly been left in the hall. Visions of skeletons stalking down the hall toward them were forced on their minds. Their knees vibrated like the



strings of a guitar. Neither of them had spoken since they reached the fourth floor. Hemlock, feeling that his legs were giving way, staggered to one side. This stopped the mysterious noise, which proved that it came from an animate being. After a short, but terrible silence, it commenced again. Their fright was redoubled. It couldn't have been greater had a ghostly apparition thrown its arms around their necks. Each was afraid to suggest the cause of their terror.

Cubeb attempted to unlock the door, but the key only described a two-inch circle around the key hole. The noise up the hall ceased again. They knew now that whatever made it was watching their movements. Hemlock, without speaking, reached for the key, and when his hands came in contact with Cubeb's, the latter, thinking a third party — perhaps the ghost of one of the stiffs inside — had joined them, became paralyzed and dropped the key to the floor. The worst fright yet followed this accident. They were both afraid to reach for the key. A dead silence of five minutes prevailed; not even the peculiar rattling up the hall, was heard. Finally, Hemlock's heart grew stronger and he picked up the key, and by steering it with a finger, placed it in the hole; but after sliding the bolt he said to himself, "Will the situation be improved when we put ourselves in the presence of twenty-seven dead human bodies?"

Cubeb gave him a push and whispered, "Open the door." Once inside, they felt more comfortable, and began to draw longer breaths. A full moon threw sufficient light into the room to enable them to distinguish the outlines of the cadavers as they lay under the white sheets.

Hemlock lit the gas and they soon located table number thirteen, on which lay their subject. The weather was quite cold and the cadavers were frozen. When they discovered this, Cubeb, who had regained his equilibrium, remarked, "I've heard a good deal about stiffs but we certainly have one that is worthy of the name." This dash of humor,

followed by hearty laughter, quieted their nerves and made them feel better. They opened the draught, stirred up the fire and soon had a hot stove. Hemlock became quite talkative, but Cubeb took on a meditative mood. He was in a brown study. Finally, he raised his head and said,

"Hemlock, do you think there is anything in numbers?"

"I don't know," said Hemlock, "that I understand what you are driving at; a large number of dollars are more desirable than a small number."

Cubeb smiled demurely and said, "I was wondering if there was bad luck in the number thirteen."

"What brought that question to your mind?"

"Why, don't you know that our subject is on table number thirteen; and then, had you thought of it? This is the thirteenth day of February."

Hemlock looked somewhat serious himself, evidently thinking of their very recent experience, and said, "I guess there's nothing in it."

The young men concluded to thaw out their subject and go to work on it; so, putting it in the ordinary sitting posture, in a chair in front of the stove, the back of the chair being placed against the table, the arms were drawn back and laid horizontally at full length on the edge of the table. The boys sat in front of their subject waiting anxiously for it to get in proper condition for their operations. They vied with each other in making comical remarks about the object before them, which was the body of a tall, lean man. Their levity was carried so far as to call forth mutual rebuke on the grounds of irreverence. In the midst of their hilarity, the cadaver becoming limber, suddenly pitched forward, giving its arms a long sweep as if to throw them around its tormentors.

The terror stricken young men, with one impulse, jumped up and bolted for the door, Cubeb unconsciously exclaiming, "thirteen! thirteen!" Down the hall they went, helter, skelter, and pell mell they tumbled down the first stairway



to the next floor. Fortunately the only injuries they sustained were a bruised nose for one and a cut face for the other. They picked themselves up and started again, but in their confusion, turned into the wrong hall, where stood a figure which they thought surely was a ghost; the light through the transom being sufficient for them to discern the object, but their impetus was too great for them to stop until they ran against it and knocked it down.

"What's the trouble here? Who are you?" exclaimed the figure in white which arose and opened the door, letting in a light that revealed Dr. Carr in his night clothes.

When they realized their ludicrous predicament, the boys were almost paralyzed. They felt compelled to explain their conduct, and begged the doctor never to tell on them, declaring that, "If the other students and the faculty hear of this episode, we will be so humiliated that it will be impossible for us to remain in the college."

The doctor said, with a twinkle in his eye, "Well, boys, this is one of those things that is too good to keep, but for the sake of your peace of mind, I will allow it to remain pent up within my own mind."

They thanked him and started to go, but on noticing the number thirteen on the door of the doctor's room, Cubeb's legs refused to carry him any further, till his companion got into the hall and said, "Come on, Cubeb."

On reaching the street Cubeb said, "Hemlock, if I were engaged to the best girl in the world and should learn that she was born on the thirteenth day of the month, I would break off the engagement." They separated and went to their respective boarding houses.

Considering Mr. Cubeb's experience as given above, it is no wonder that he made the mistake of getting into the wrong bedroom. He had been in bed only a few minutes, when a gentleman and lady came into the room, lit the gas and sat down. The lady went to sewing, and they engaged in quiet conversation. Cubeb could not understand the



strange proceeding. He thought no one but himself and room mate, who seemed to be sound asleep on the other side of the bed, had any right in this room, especially at this time of night. As he lay there wondering why he should have so many strange experiences in one night, the man said something that caused the lady to exclaim, "How dare you make such a remark in a room where there is a dead man?"

Simultaneously with this remark, Cubeb happened to glance up at the transom and noticed on it the number thirteen. The shock was not quite so severe, but that he was able to raise his head and look over at his quiet bed-fellow. It was a corpse! Cubeb instantly threw back the covers, sprang out on to the floor and started for the door. But the lady, thinking that the corpse had come to life, jumped up, uttered a terrible scream that was heard all over the neighborhood, and beat Cubeb into the hall. But he overtook her before she reached the stairway landing, where he made a jump half way to the bottom, and then an accidental summersault landed him in the parlor, where several ladies and gentlemen had assembled on account of the death of the landlord.

The pledge the boys secured from Dr. Carr fell to naught for the discovery of their cadaver on the floor and the doors all open Sunday morning caused the incident to be revealed, and this is how the reader is enabled to learn of it.

IT WAS A CORPSE.







## CHAPTER XVI.

### PROCURING MATERIAL FOR DISSECTING PURPOSES.

"In the regular way," is a stereotyped expression among medical men, which contains volumes of meaning, and yet it has no definite meaning at all. Ask the management of a medical college how they get their "stiffs" for the use of their students in the dissecting room or for practical instruction in surgery in the amphitheater, and their answer will be, "in the regular way;" ask the practitioner in the village where he got any part of a human body he may have for the purposes of making anatomical or pathological investigations, and you will receive the same answer, "in the regular way;" if the body of a criminal who is executed or dies in prison, is turned over to a medical college or an individual practitioner, either through legal process or bribery, they have procured it "in the regular way;" if an unknown corpse found floating in the harbor or river, is either presented or sold to a physician or a medical college, why, that is the "regular way;" when a corpse, lying in the undertaker's room prepared for burial, is replaced with a log of about the same weight, the thief has obtained his prize "in the regular way;" and when medical students go out to the cemetery and exhume the body of a young lady of wealth and position, surrounded by relatives and loving friends, they have — provided they do not get caught — only acted "in the regular way."

The circumstance is passing out of mind, but many of the older physicians in the United States will corroborate the following: For a number of years during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, three medical colleges in one of the middle states had a standing contract with a

man by the name of Cunningham, to furnish them with dissecting material. The bodies he procured during vacation were salted down for future use; but he was especially active in this peculiar occupation from the beginning of cold weather until the dissecting season arrived; for bodies obtained at this time were more easily kept, and being fresh, brought a better price. Mr. Cunningham, though very eccentric, was a bright, jolly, interesting fellow and made friends with everybody; was on intimate terms with all the professors and made the acquaintance of every student in the various colleges of the city. They depended on him for all their "stiffs," because he possessed such perfect facilities for obtaining them — in the regular way.

For several years it was his custom at the beginning of the lecture courses to sell his own body to the highest bidder of all the colleges, to be dissected by the students of the college that bid him off, if he should die during the term. But it was specifically understood that he should be allowed the privilege of dying a natural death. Finally, after a number of years of waiting and disappointment, and only a few weeks before the dissecting season opened, Mr. Cunningham went the way of all the earth. His family seemed perfectly willing for the terms of the contract to be carried out. The lucky college took possession of the body; but when the dissecting classes were organized, the question as to how this particular subject should be assigned, became exceedingly interesting. Several classes made exorbitant bids for it; but the college management, desiring that fairness should prevail, required this cadaver to be drawn "in the regular way." The excitement became intense. Every student prayed in his heart that the number drawn by his class would correspond with that of the table on which the late Mr. Cunningham's remains were lying. As the janitor stood in the "Bull pen," in the middle of the amphitheater, preparing the box for drawing, the scene, while it lacked the frantic gesticulations and unintelligible jabbering, re-



minded the spectator of the Chicago Board of Trade. Wherefore this unusual interest and anxiety? Was there any special feature about the organs and tissues of this cadaver that added to its intrinsic value? Did it possess the power of imparting extraordinary knowledge to him whose lot it should be to examine it? Was it only a desire — perhaps morbid — to have the satisfaction of making a study of this remarkable individual's carcass? Or was it a prize of unknown value? The sequel will show.

The arrangements being completed, the foremen stepped forward, one by one as the janitor called their names, and with trembling hands, drew out a ticket; but not until they had repaired to the dissecting room and compared numbers, was it known who held the lucky ticket. While investigation was being hurriedly made, some one exclaimed, "Number seven!" This significant exclamation was understood and taken up by others, when a student in the far end of the room held his ticket up and said, "Here's number seven!" and rushed to the table where lay the famous subject, saying, "I always said there was luck in odd numbers, and the Bible says seven is the perfect number."

A young man, noted for dry humor, proposed some consolation to the unlucky ones:

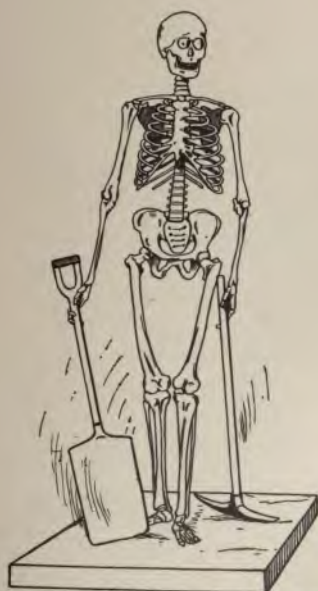
"O well, it's all right; there's no more anatomy in Cunningham's carcass than there is in these other poor mortals lying round here."

Mr. Cunningham's obituary might have been truthfully written thus: "He was a good citizen, a public spirited man, popular with his neighbors, a kind husband, indulgent father and a valuable aid in the promotinon of science. His material benefit to man extended far beyond the point where men's activities and usefulness usually cease." Nor did his contribution to science end in the dissecting room, for the three colleges he had served so long and faithfully entered into a contest for his bones. The usual way of disposing of the bones was for the members of each class to

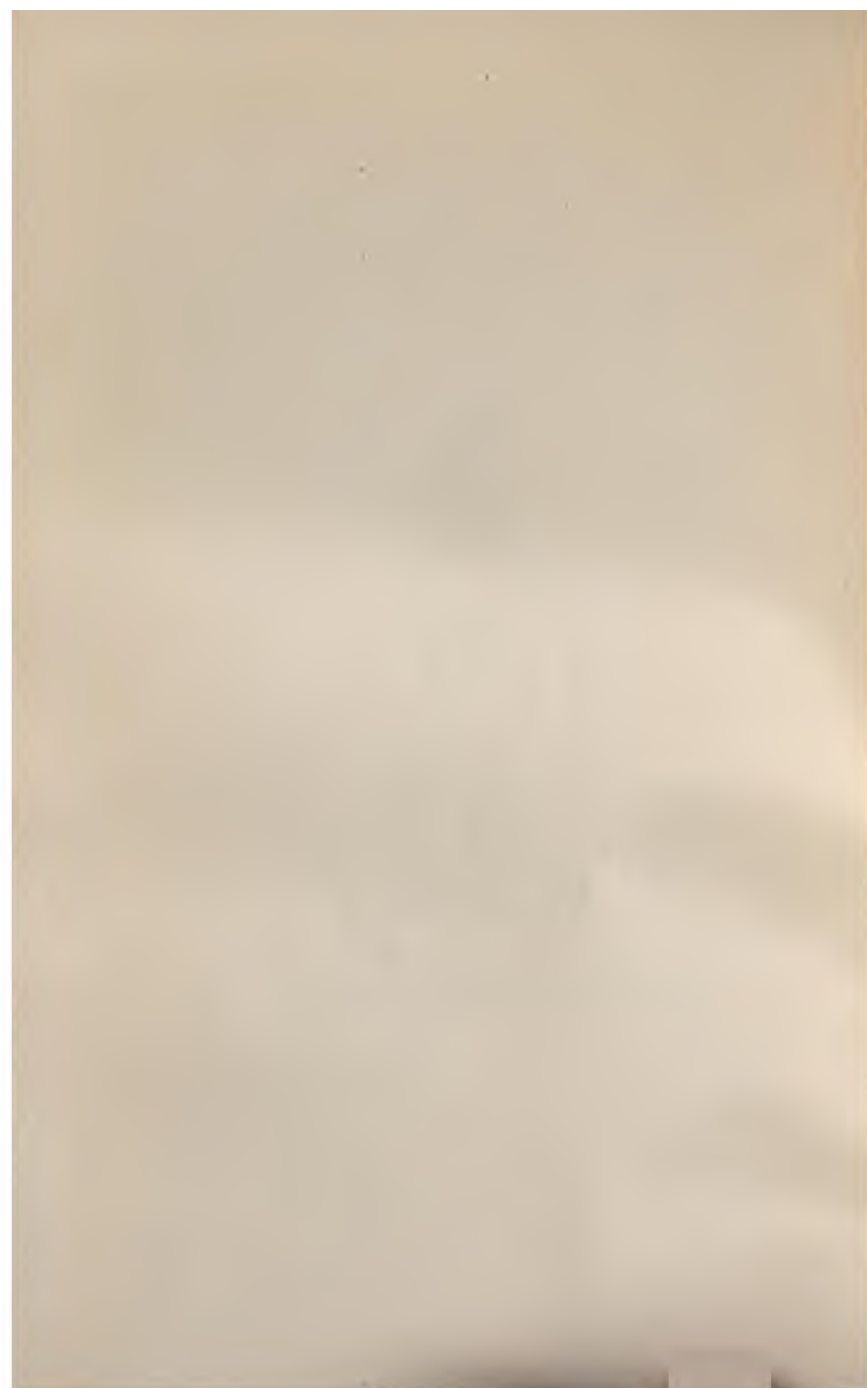


either draw cuts for them or four sell out to the fifth. The colleges bid against each other until this set of bones was knocked off to Blank College at the enormous price of \$400.00. Surmises and conjectures were rife as to the reason for this extravagant desire for Cunningham's bones. But it was not known until the opening of the next lecture course, when the students of the successful college visited the anatomical museum and saw, mounted on a magnificent marble pedestal a clean, bright, perfectly articulated skeleton with a pick and shovel in its hands and this significant epitaph on the die, "Cunningham, The Resurrectionist."

But the inscription would have been more complete, had the following been added: "His body was procured in the regular way."



CUNNINGHAM, THE RESURRECTIONIST.





## CHAPTER XVII.

### READY FOR PRACTICE.

Having decided to go into practice at the close of the term without a diploma, I ascertained which states were without laws regulating the practice of medicine, and concluded to locate in Iowa.

"Does this train go to Petville?" The sky was cloudy and I had traveled more than a thousand miles in the last three days with but little sound sleep, therefore it was no wonder that I was unable to tell whether the train was headed west or east.

"Yes, sir," replied the express agent as he shifted the packages that had been thrown into the car.

I went aboard, and as the train pulled out of Des Moines and sped over the prairies, I said to myself, "I'm glad that my journey is so nearly ended." As each mile was left behind I realized more and more the importance and uncertainty of the situation.

During this last three quarters of an hour's run I sat at the car window contrasting the wide, level prairies, dotted here and there with a small frame house and a temporary stable, with the hills, rocks, heavy timber, stone houses and large bank barns of Pennsylvania. It seemed that on nearly every quarter section was a pond of stagnant water covering from one to several acres.

The occasional flight of wild ducks from these ponds, an army of tall, stately cranes stalking over the fields and a triangle of wild geese sailing through the air bound for their summer resort in Canada were calculated to impress one with the newness of the country. The town, which contained three hundred inhabitants, was also in a crude

state, having been laid out less than two years before my arrival.

After visiting a few days with some former acquaintances from Pennsylvania, who were the cause of my coming, I rented a room — only one room — in which to open an office. This room had also to serve for my lodging. I realized the inconvenience and embarrassment of such an arrangement but it was the best I could do.

A complete invoice of my furniture and fixtures after declaring myself ready for business, would have shown a small, plain, pine table, three cheap wood-bottomed chairs, one common rocker, a single lounge, one fifty cent lamp, a trunk and a curtain drawn across one corner of the room to conceal my bed clothes which lay on the trunk. My library consisted of six medical works, including a copy of Dunglison's dictionary, and three works of fiction.

The reader may not be able to harmonize this description with what he has learned of my disposition, tastes, aspirations and plans. The explanation is that circumstances alter cases. Circumstances had changed. When my good old uncle discovered my persistent inclination to spend money so freely for livery rigs, theater and show tickets, superfluous clothing, etc., he drew the strings a good deal tighter on his exchequer.

There was no carpet on my office floor nor blinds on the windows, but I prevailed on my landlord to paper the walls. My circumstances were rather humiliating, but in the midst of it all I had the consolation of knowing that I was the best dressed man in town; so, outside of my office, which very few of the citizens had seen, I had the appearance of affluence. I imagined that a plug hat and rich neckties would lend a dignity that would neutralize the effects of forced economy in other things. Dr. Clark was a very dressy man and he often hinted to me that this was a prominent element in his success. He advised me to dress well



and keep a stylish driving rig, even if I had to live on two meals a day and go without socks.

On completing arrangements for practice and having nothing to do but wait for patients, the feeling became peculiarly interesting. What was there that I could do to draw customers? And how would I acquit myself in the first consultation and prescription? Supposing it should be an urgent case with several friends around and I not able to determine what to do for the patient? Would I create an unfavorable impression by some egregious blunder or lack of assurance, thus obstructing my road to success? I hedged against this misfortune by selecting certain harmless medicines to always have ready to give impromptu, after which I could have time to study the case and refer to the books.

Before leaving home I received several more or less valuable pointers on medical ethics from Dr. Clark, my preceptor. He said it was the duty of a physician immediately after locating, to call on all the other doctors in the town; so, the next day after putting out my "shingle," I dropped into Dr. Gamboge's office. I found the doctor sitting with a pipe in his mouth playing checkers with a fellow townsman.

"This, I suppose is Dr. Gamboge; I am Dr. Fussanfeathers, recently of Pennsylvania."

"Well, I feel highly honored by your mistake; but this gentleman here," pointing to the other, "is Dr. Gamboge." It flashed over me that Dr. Gamboge might be offended at my taking the other man, who was an ordinary individual, for the doctor.

He deliberately lifted the pipe from his mouth, ejected half a gill of salivary infusion of tobacco on to the stove hearth and said in a brusque, self-possessed manner, "Yes, Gamboge is my name; have a cheer and set down." I obeyed orders.



"I understand," continued the doctor, "you've come here to practice medicine."

"Yes," I replied, "that is my intention."

"Well, don't you think I'm able to furnish plenty of business for the undertaker without any help? Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Dr. Gamboge was, all in all, an interesting character; large and rather corpulent, jolly, good natured, naturally intelligent, fond of telling stories, many of which were not conspicuous for their chasteness, possessed considerable force of character; but his better qualities were largely neutralized by careless, slovenly habits and unceasing profanity. On looking up his credentials, I was pleased to find that he never had attended a medical school nor studied medicine under an instructor of any kind. I now made great calculations on my Philadelphia education and fine clothes, which I resolved to display to the best advantage.

But one source of anxiety was as to how I could conceal the fact that I was not a graduate. While Dr. Camboge, whom I considered but little in my way, was my only immediate competitor, the Petville people often called physicians over from the county seat. But I was sure this could be accounted for by the incompetency and unpopularity of my competitor.

After my visit with Dr. Camboge I sat down to wait for customers, wondering what kind of a case my first would be. This process was continued day after day for seven long weeks. Things were looking blue. I was homesick. Formerly, I had looked on this ailment as a matter of imagination; a symptom of weakness. I had accused my fellow students of this when they expressed an anxiety to get back home. Only for a pair of hazel eyes, black hair and fair complexion, my mind would have made very few visits to Jamburg during the term.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE FIRST PATIENT.

Time dragged. I could not become interested in any kind of reading. The only relief I got was by mounting my horse and galloping over the sparsely settled prairies. I called this killing two birds with one stone; besides being a pastime, it gave me the appearance of having some business. But this did not satisfy. I wanted a case. I finally got one. While seated in a chair nervously rocking on the third day of June, wishing the heavy clouds that had been hovering over the earth for a few days, thus increasing my gloom, would disperse, a young man rushed into my office very much excited, and said, "They want you at Snyder's as quick as you can get there."

"All right," said I, "I'll go right away."

Not until after the messenger was gone, did I realize that I was shocked. The very thing that I longed for, prayed for and worried over because it didn't come, had actually made me uncomfortable. It was so sudden — only seven weeks coming. It was the excited, "as soon as you can get there," that produced the awful effect. What would I do? It must be one of those exciting emergency cases which demand prompt and heroic treatment. The hopes that my initial case would be a simple, unimportant one, were dissipated. My embarrassment and uneasiness were augmented by the fact that the Snyders were among the most prominent and intelligent people in the town. I picked up my little medicine case and started but actually regretted that they had called me. What kind of a case was it? If an accident or something alarming, there probably would be several neighbors in to witness my awkward-

ness. If I only knew what the patient was, man, woman or child, I might be studying up some plan of action, preliminary or general remarks in the way of easing my manner. It had always been my intention to make an extra good impression at the very beginning of my professional career. This was to be a strong point with me; but just now my greatest desire was to avoid a bad impression. The house was four blocks away — I wished it were ten." I did not hurry as I was expected to do, but it seemed — to me — that I reached it in a remarkably short time — I wanted more time to think and cool down.

"Doctor, hurry up! We're glad to see you. We have a very sick woman here."

These words uttered in great excitement and with a vigorous motion of the hand by Mrs. Hubbard, a neighbor, as I entered the door yard, did not have a sedative effect on my agitated brain. I was ushered into a room where Mrs. Snyder lay in a comatose state. I stood and looked at her a while, tried to look wise; but I'm rather inclined to think a physiognomist would have said I had a puzzled, if not stupid expression. I felt the patient's pulse. "Let me see your tongue." I said.

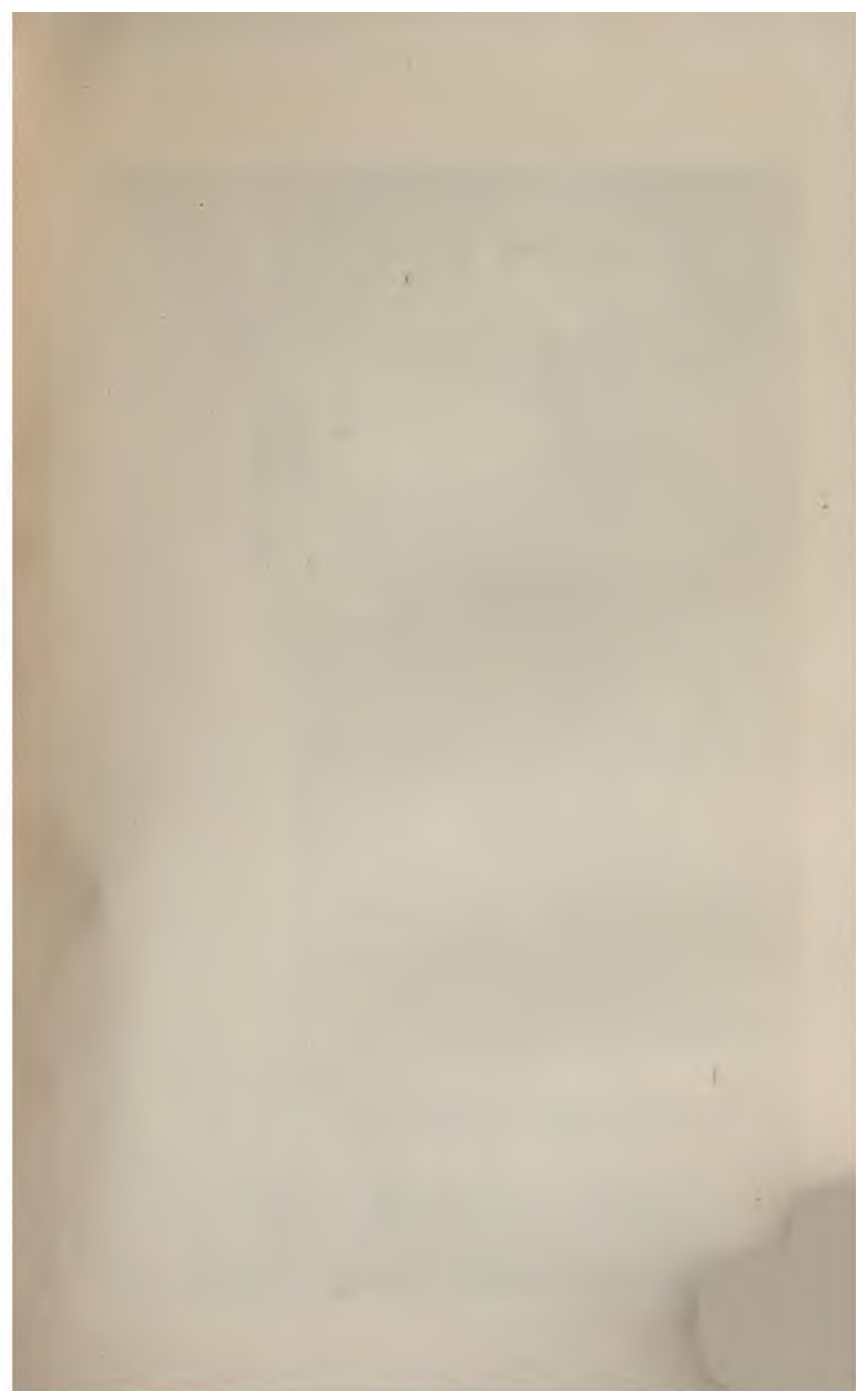
"Why, doctor," said Mrs. Hubbard, "she's too far gone to put out her tongue or do anything else."

I believed so too, but I couldn't think of anything just then outside of the routine. The machinery inside of my cranium was not working smoothly. It jumped a cog once in a while, for, in attempting the routine examination, I forgot to use my body thermometer and also those impromptu remedies that I had planned so carefully to use on the spur of the moment. After partially recovering from my stroke of mental paralysis, I went to asking questions; very disconnectedly, however.

Finally a woman said, in earnest tones, "Doctor, ar'n't you going to do something for this woman?"

Great heavens! I thought to myself, what can I do? The







"LOOK!" SAID MRS. HUBBARD, "SHE'S GOING TO HAVE ANOTHER CONVULSION." I FELT AS  
THOUGH I WOULD HAVE ONE, TOO.

patient appears to be dead already! I tried to set my mind in motion and decide on some remedy but couldn't think of anything but my inability to think and the criticisms the bystanders evidently were making of me in their minds. This increased the embarrassment and confusion. Nothing is so embarrassing as to realize that you are embarrassed. I said, "Better put something hot to her feet." This, I hoped, would ease the strain, but two women, speaking at once, said, "She's got two irons and a hot blanket to her feet now." I was thrown off again.

"Look!" said Mrs. Hubbard, "she is going to have another convulsion!" I felt as though I would have one, too.

The patient's eye-balls rolled up till nothing but the whites could be seen; every muscle in her body, seemingly, jerked for a minute and then they would remain rigid a few minutes, during which time there was no perceptible breathing.

"She's an awful sick woman," I managed to say.

The excitement was intense. The husband wrung his hands and exclaimed between sobs, "O, Laura, dear, don't leave me!"

He kneeled and kissed her. Sympathetic tears trickled down the cheeks of all the women; but I had the wettest handkerchief in the house — the moisture in it was sudorific, however, instead of lacrymal. It was not a hot day, nor was I making any great physical exertion, but the perspiration had melted my paper collar.

These clonic and tonic spasms alternated for ten minutes and then the patient lapsed into a comatose state again, from which it seemed impossible to arouse her. Breathing was very slow and quiet. I thought of stimulants and sent for some whiskey, but she could not swallow it. It only strangled her.

"Just as well let her die in peace," suggested a kind, sympathetic soul standing at the foot of the bed. I coin-



cided with this idea and didn't care how soon the end came.

"Dr. Gamboge is coming!"

This was welcome news, although I had resolved not to counsel with Dr. Gamboge, a man who had never attended medical college. I addressed him very cordially as he entered the room. He stepped to the bedside, and, perfectly self-possessed, glanced at the patient, felt her pulse, and said, "How long has she been sick?"

"About an hour and a half — that is, bad, this way. Dr. Fussanfeathers has been here an hour," was the answer.

After one or two more questions the convulsions commenced again — but they did not go so hard with *me* this time. Dr. Gamboge's presence was a wonderful relief to me. He watched the patient awhile and, turning to the distressed husband, said, in almost a laughing tone,

"O, Mr. Snyder, don't worry, your wife ain't goin' to die."

I looked at him and wondered how to account for his indifference — brutal indifference! Was he drunk?

The reader, if he be an experienced practitioner evidently has, ere this, made a correct diagnosis of the case.

"Come in here," said Dr. Gamboge. I followed him into an adjoining room.

"Well," said the doctor, "what have you been doing for this woman?"

"Why—I—er—you—know—she's—she's too far gone to take any medicine —"

"She can't be more than three months gone," and the doctor laughed out loud.

I was now as much puzzled over Dr. Gamboge's conduct as I had been over what to do for the patient. I thought it was only further proof of his intoxication. But I ventured the question,

"What do you think is the matter with her?"

"Why," said the doctor, "it's just an old-fashioned case of hysterics."

I felt like kicking myself. The vail was lifted. The vivid description of hysteria as given by Professor Snell of the medical college, with all the laughable details and incidental history, came to my mind in a flash. We returned to the sick room.

Dr. Gamboge, approaching the patient, said, in a jocular manner, "Say, Mrs. Snyder, what's the trouble? Open your eyes and talk to us. Come, you'd better git out o' this."

I knew every one would think the doctor drunk now; but he went on with so much assurance that no one interfered. One woman, however, remarked, "Doctor, you certainly don't think she is dangerous."

"O, no," said the doctor, "she ain't a bit dangerous. You can go right up to her and put your hands on her; she won't hurt you."

Another hearty ha! ha!! Then he saturated a rag with aqua ammonia and put it to her nose. She turned her head, opened her eyes and sneezed. The doctor diluted some of the liquid and put a teaspoonful in her mouth; she suddenly raised up, pawed the air and coughed violently. The fumes strangled her.

"O, doctor! are you trying to kill me? I'll die soon enough, anyhow." She dropped her head on the pillow and stared at the ceiling, apparently breathing only about once a minute. Her husband and all the women gathered round the bed and gazed sadly at the patient as if to see the last breath go out.

"How do you feel, Mrs. Snyder?" asked a woman. No answer.

Dr. Gamboge shook her and said something; the patient opened her eyes and looked at him.

"Say, Mrs. Snyder," the doctor continued, "do you want another dose of that medicine?"

"No," she gasped, "I don't. I—can't—get—my breath."

"O yes, you can. You're all right. You'll soon be well."

"No—doctor—I'll—never—get—out—of—this—bed a—live—no." Then she lapsed into a stupor. No amount of shaking or talking could reveal any consciousness. The doctor took out his bottle of ammonia.

"Doctor!" alarmingly exclaimed a woman, "are you going to kill the woman?"

"No, mam; gist the opposite; I'm goin' to raise her from the dead."

One of the women stepped into an adjoining room and in an instant Mr. Snyder, evidently having been beckoned, quickly went into the same room. Of course the woman was going to give the husband some advice. They soon returned, but before they had time to say anything, Dr. Gamboge said,

"There's two ways to git rid of devils; one is to drown 'em out and the other is to burn 'em out."

All eyes were turned to him, some in astonishment and others in disgust, and then to one another as if for a response.

"I guess I'll use fire in this case," continued the doctor. "Mr. Snyder, bring me some dry straw — never mind, these papers will do." And, wadding some newspapers into a loose bunch, he said, "Now, I'm going to burn up this bed." And he actually lit the papers and held them under the bed, exclaiming, "Now, here she goes! Whoop! Whuah!"

Mrs. Snyder raised up and got out of bed quicker than she ever had since she was a child, ran into another room, sat down, buried her face in her elbow, which was resting on the back of the chair and went to sobbing. Some of the company entered the room but she hastily returned to the sick chamber, laughing as she went. "Dr. Gamboge, you think you're terrible smart, don't you?" she blurted out, and then laughed quite naturally.

"O, I don't mean to be conceited," said the doctor, "but you're all right now. I'll give you a nice tonic that'll make you feel good."



After putting out the medicine, he left the house accompanied by myself.

I secretly felt under everlasting obligations to Dr. Gamboe for coming to my relief; but was awfully provoked at myself for not being able to diagnose the case. I tried to get some consolation, however, from the fact that all of those women were badly puzzled, too.

The experienced physician will not be surprised on learning that this incident was followed in six or seven months by an increase in the Snyder family.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### A DILEMMA

From the time I left medical college I had put a good deal of thought on what would be my first professional experience, its possibilities and influence. And now I thought it very remarkable that my initial case should be so peculiar — almost sensational. After it was over it was as puzzling as before. To what extent would it advertise my ignorance and incompetency? This troubled me more on account of its being so well known that Dr. Gamboge was uneducated in medical science, and yet proved to be so much better informed than I. That familiar saying, "The first impression is lasting," occupied a prominent place in my mind. It worried me, for I was sure that my first professional work would make a bad "first impression."

The only consolation I could think of, was the hope that my competitor's theoretical qualifications and personal appearance would be as detrimental to him as the first impression would be to me. But I found that Dr. Gamboge had made many friends and they were, many of them, among the more intelligent, influential people. But then, looking back, I thought this could be accounted for in the fact that, as my preceptor taught me, the people are almost totally unable to judge, either by observation or experience, of the physician's qualifications. Fact is, there is a great deal of unacknowledged superstition, even in the most enlightened communities, concerning the science of medicine. Many people think the physician is born, not made by hard study — that he possesses innate wisdom in the line of his profession, which even a superior intellect cannot acquire by study and research.

Dr. Gamboge's lack of education was largely compensated by natural ability and force of character. His unusual magnetism drew binding friendships. Putting all these things together, it is easily seen that my situation was not redolent of hope and thrift. But what could I do? My circumstances precluded any thoughts of pulling up stakes and seeking another location. As day after day passed without my receiving the second call, and my little exchequer was rapidly ebbing, sunshine was becoming a scarce article within my horizon. Clouds were the most prominent things that struck my vision. Yet, once in awhile these would break and a pair of hazel eyes, black hair and fair complexion would peep through. Then I would be cheerful and think life was worth living. Hope would take the place of despondency and future prospects would lighten my burdens.

But while I took a good deal of pleasure in contemplating the future, I realized that there was something more for me to do than await events. The circumstance that was to make me the happiest man in the world was at least three years off yet and in the meantime I must not only earn a living for myself but the accumulation of a surplus was essential to the consummation of my plans; but conditions must change before this can be accomplished. I had been located three months, yet the second call for my professional services had not come, and was there any assurance that another quarter would not pass with the same result? Certainly there was nothing in my reputation to make it different. On the contrary, my professional work, so far, had made for me a record that was more likely to repel than attract patronage. Then Dr. Gamboge, with the occasional assistance of county-seat doctors, was fully able to do all the practice for the neighborhood. So it seemed that the only thing for me to do was to be a Micawber. But how long could I wait for something to turn up—that would give me a start? In another month my last dollar would



be gone; and there was no one in a position to help me whom I had the courage to ask to do so. Life was no longer a dream to me. I was getting a good taste of its realities.

When that last dollar was gone, a month's rent due and my landlady dunning me for board money, I was thrown into a reflective mood. I imagined that everybody in the neighborhood knew my circumstances and were making it a matter of gossip. This was my first real trouble. All others were borrowed. I looked back to various perplexities and disagreeable controversies and disappointments with surprise. Why had I worried and allowed myself to be annoyed by such trivial affairs? They were mole hills compared with this mountain of grief that was crushing out my ambition, appetite, social faculties and ability to sleep. I was becoming absent minded, my countenance was losing whatever brightness it had possessed and my step was losing its elasticity. Things were different from what I expected. I sat, day after day in my office, hoping that something would turn up that would put some money in my pocket, but recoiling at every footstep on the sidewalk from fear that it might be the landlord coming to collect overdue rent, or perhaps my landlady coming to my office, through a kindly desire to avoid publicity, to urge me either to settle my bill or seek another boarding place. I had always scorned pessimism, but now I was becoming pretty well acquainted with pessimistic thoughts.

Heretofore my troubles had been like fleecy clouds that come unheralded and vanish in a moment. There was something in my nature, which phrenologists would call egotism and selfishness that caused me to grow up with the idea that I was born under a lucky star and was a child of destiny (and I yet entertain the belief that whatever success I have attained in the world may be attributed largely to this trait in my character). I had felt that the world was my debtor and I had a right to collect the debt in installments at my own sweet will. But now I concluded that

if such were the case there was a payment overdue, and the problem as to how I was to secure my rights was a difficult one. Would I be able to remain in Petville? The outlook was gloomy and discouraging.

My indebtedness would increase, and this would weaken my chances for success. It would be useless to try to prevent the facts being universally known, for in small towns everybody knows everybody's business. So strange that one who had been buoyed up and delighted a number of years by anticipation of success, glory and renown should experience such humiliating disappointment at the beginning of his career! I had heard of persons that were worried into insomnia and ill health by worldly troubles; but why should it fall to my lot to join these mortals? For a moment I would conclude that it was a dream; providence would not lay such cruel hand on me. Good luck was not far off and it would enter my door before the climax was reached. Visions of remunerative cash cases would lighten my heart. Then before I could get any pleasure out of these thoughts my mental state would change in a flash, and I could see my little handful of furniture being sold by the constable for rent, the boarding house door closed against me and myself compelled to seek a livelihood by some species of wage earning, a thing which I felt would be intolerably degrading.

Worry had been my constant companion for some time but on a particular day I was buried for hours in painful, chilling revery. I was oblivious to every thing but my own troubles. Unconsciously taking a position in the middle of the floor, I stood one hour looking into space, scarcely lifting a foot or hand. My mind ran over unnecessary and foolish expenditures of the last two years. What convenience and happiness I might now get out of the precious dollars I spent for livery rigs, circuses and other unprofitable shows, besides the dimes I squandered at the cigar counters, beer gardens, soda fountains and candy stores simply to gratify a perverted taste and popularize myself among the



girls and boys. And this is not the worst; I thought of the money I spent while at medical college in those awful places of resort, the names of which my pen refuses to write.

No young man ever realized his error more than I did; and pondering over them was not a pleasant occupation, yet I could not help revolving them in my mind. They crowded everything else out. I was shocked at my imprudence. What strong radical resolutions I made. I promised myself that hereafter, whatever my situation and circumstances, I would live economically and my conduct in every particular would be faultless in the eyes of the most austere moralist.

But I was mostly concerned about the present. Something must happen or something had to be done, and that very soon. My mind was on a terrible strain. I would have to get some patients or I would soon be out of patience. The former would supply the latter.

I would say that the clouds that made the world look so dark to me on this day were not all figurative. It is well known to the student of metaphysics that those great mountains of partially condensed vapor which so often overhang the earth sometimes have a wonderful influence on the human mind and body. While they often cheer by heralding providential blessings, they sometimes chill the soul by shutting out nourishment to the nervous system which is conveyed by the sun's rays. It was one of those dark chilly days in October which serve as a positive warning of the approaching cold season. The temperature was not low, hardly cold enough for a fire, yet disagreeable. It was the time of year, and the elements were in that condition when a little cold goes a long way. Occasionally when the northwest wind made a breach in the clouds the sun would throw its kindly rays through my window and seem to say, "Cheer up, brighter times are coming." The light would enable me to look beyond the gloom; my lot would at once lose some of its bitterness. During the latter half of that day the state of



my mind alternated between hope and despair as the shifting clouds obscured and exposed the sun.

Ever since this experience I have wondered why a more systematic and practical study has not been made of the influence of sunlight on the human economy. I had always ridiculed that species of superstition which placed faith in signs, but at that time I wished there might be some virtue in the adage, "The darkest hour is just before dawn."

## CHAPTER XX.

### RENEWED HOPE.

I went to bed that night under the conviction that my locating in Petville was a mistake. There was only practice enough for one doctor and Dr. Gamboge had that. While he was not a college bred physician, his keen perception, astute observation and superior reasoning faculties served to a considerable extent as a good substitute for book lore. Then his genial manner and the impression of honesty he made on the community seemed to enable him to control the situation.

Instead of sleeping on that memorable night, I spent most of it trying to evolve from my brains some practicable plan for securing a more inviting location; but the morning came and the forenoon passed without any pleasing results. But before night I found myself in cheerful spirits, repeating the following adages: "The darkest hour is just before dawn," "It never rains but it pours." My attitude toward signs was changed.

Reader, did you ever dream that you were in church barefooted? Of course you have. Everybody has; then when you awoke you felt just as I did on October the third, 1870. As I walked the streets that evening I exclaimed in audible tones, "It was all a dream." My happiness knew no bounds, and before sleep came to me that night I had erected air castles that reached higher than those clouds that had, during the last three days, made me so miserable. I recoiled no more at footsteps under my window nor turned the corner to avoid meeting my landlord, and no longer did I watch for an opportunity to rise from the table and leave my boarding house when

the landlady was not looking, feeling like the small boy when he extracts a lump of sugar from the barrel in the grocery and starts for the door.

Wherefore this wonderful change? Twenty dollars had found their way into my pocket, and a letter in a beautiful square envelope was handed me by the postmaster — I recognized the handwriting. About two o'clock that afternoon, while brooding over my unfortunate circumstances and promising an All-wise Providence that if ever I got out of these troubles I would forever and eternally avoid the folly and mistakes that brought them on, I heard footsteps ascending the stairway. My first impulse was to get behind the partition and play "not at home," for I could think of nothing but my landlord; but, fearing that he might know I was in, which would double the embarrassment, I snatched up a book and assumed a reading posture, but instead of studying medicine I set my wits to work on excuses and explanations. As my visitor opened the door I looked around with fear and trembling, but only to discover a young man entering my office in a negative manner with an expression of diffidence in his face. He sat down and made some remarks about the weather and finally announced his errand. Later on in my practice I was always able to diagnose such cases from the patient's manner without any examination or a word of description from his lips. Conscience is a great tell-tale. Fortunately, the man, knowing the rules of the profession in such cases, came prepared to pay in advance; and nothing ever received a heartier welcome than that ten dollar bill did when it came into my hands. It was a powerful tonic to my tired brain and an anodyne to my aching heart. After being assured that I understood my obligation in regard to keeping professional secrets, the patient left my office in better spirits than when he came.

I had scarcely entered into the joys of this little turn of good luck when a messenger came in with a call for me to



hurry out three miles into the countrv. It was another ten dollar case, but of quite a different kind. A pleasing feature of this case was, besides getting the ten dollar fee before leaving the house, the patient and her husband told me that I was not merely a substitute, but their first choice. This made me feel that I had gained the nucleus of a practice and reputation, which I would nourish with strict attention to business, a dignified manner, the best clothes in the market, broad smiles, hearty handshakes and finally a good library, a fine driving rig and all the other ingredients that Dr. Clark advised me to throw into my professional life.

Some very pleasing compliments were passed by the two neighbor women, on my management of the case, which I knew would bring me more patronage. I drove back to town in an exalted state of mind. Fortune was shedding sweet hope around me.

The common dirt road was hardly good enough for me to travel on. I was right in the swim. I made even loaded teams give the road. I was a doctor, a professional man on duty — get out of my way! I had more than once been under the influence of common whiskey, but the intoxication of sudden prosperity was a much pleasanter sensation. How changed since the same hour yesterday! Then, I could have asked Robert Holmes to loan me a dollar, now I looked over the farms as I passed, assuring myself that it was only a question of time — short time — when I would own some of them and hold mortgages on others.

To put me in a condition to enjoy the full effects of my change of fortune, the clouds disappeared about noon, giving complete right of way to the sun's rays that they might impart cheer and vigor to all nature.

I ate a much heartier supper that evening than usual and paid my landlady two weeks' board, then went to my landlord and squared up my rent.

The day's blessings already seemed full, but there was

more to follow; I went to the postoffice for my evening mail; there was a peculiar significance in the tinted square envelope which I found in my box. I opened it — after returning to my office — with an impatient, unsteady hand.

After admiring the envelope, the superscription, the dainty sheets of paper and neatness and precision of folding, I commenced to read:

Reuben Fussanfeathers,

Remembered Friend:

I acknowledge the receipt of your interesting letter of September 10th.

It was with pleasure that I learned of your good health, favorable prospects and pleasant surroundings. It surely is interesting to sit at the window of one's place of business where the eye has to survey miles and miles of treeless landscape before it reaches the horizon. How wild it must seem. I like things that are romantic to the eye as well as to the imagination. I long for the time when I may be able to verify the description I have read of the grandeur and magnificence of western scenery. And, of course, in the Rocky Mountains and the Sierras are added greater sublimity and objects that inspire more awe and reverence. I want to go there some time, too.

Yes, it was remarkable that your first case should be so startling. I should think the young physician would assume the great responsibilities of his profession with considerable trepidation and lack of confidence.

You ask how I am getting along with my studies: now, that is a hard question. Could you be sure of a really sincere answer to such a question? Aren't you sufficiently versed in human nature to know that if a school girl were doing well in her work she would be too modest to say so, and if she were doing poorly she would not admit it? Ask an easy one next time. However, I will just say that I like my teachers, my studies are agreeable and I am not always at the foot of my class. Mental philosophy and modern lan-

guages are my favorite studies. You would\* take us to be from *Parée* if you should hear us *parlia France* at our recitations. I am always ready for the physical culture hour. Will you think it incredible when I say that I now raise four hundred and eighty pounds on the health lift and shove the twenty-five pound dumb-bells, two at a time, arms length above my head.

You probably knew that Fred Instep attended school regularly all last year; and Mother writes me that he has entered the high school, takes a great interest in his school work and says he is determined to secure a liberal education. I was so glad to hear this, for Fred is a bright boy, but, owing to his peculiar disposition, this course is probably his only safeguard against an unenviable career. Robert Holmes is now station agent at Jamburg, having succeeded Mr. Hopkins who has also been promoted.

Do you get homesick? Do I? Well, I admit that once in a while my mind hovers around the parental fireside more than around my lessons.

Without any further excuse than that I have written as much as you will care to read, I close. Your letters are always welcome.

Sincerely yours,

Gertrude Stover.

The reader will not have to draw on his imagination to conclude that I read this letter with a great deal of interest. It seemed to have come to round out the day's blessings. I went over it the second time to see what comfort I could get out of its analysis and interpretations: "Remembered Friend." It was a consolation not to be forgotten by the prettiest eyes, softest hair and fairest complexion in America. Of course our relations had not reached the "dear" point. A great comfort to know that you are able to interest an angel.

"Pleased to learn of your favorable prospects and pleasant surroundings." It looks as if she was contemplating



the future. O, I guess its all right. "Long for the time when I may be able to verify—" that is, come west. I only hope I may, by the time she graduates, be able to support her.

"Lift four hundred and eighty pounds;" that's good.

So, that little rascal, Fred Instep, is going to get a good education. Glad to hear it. He'll make a success in the world. "Robert Holmes"—Great heavens! Why in thunder does she mention his name? Is it possible that she's interested in that detestable fellow? This part of the letter changed my spirits; my heart sank down toward my boots. Why should a cruel thorn be dropped into a path so recently strewn with roses?

After the rapture of Gertrude's letter subsided, which was not for a day or two after its receipt, I devoted my thoughts to serious consideration of the situation. During these days I was occasionally encouraged by a professional call, and finally I was thrown into ecstasy by being called in consultation with a physician from the county seat. I thought I had reached the acme of delight. I was in an honorable and enviable position. A wide distinction is made between the consulting physician and the consulting surgeon. The latter is only an assistant, while the former is acknowledged as a superior, capable of giving valuable advice. This was a serious case, and I was the consulting physician. The patient recovered, and I now felt that the corner-stone of a great reputation and fortune had been laid.

This settled the question of my remaining in Petville; and my next move was to get rid of my competitor. I was determined to have a very large practice but could not have it as long as the work in the neighborhood was divided between two doctors. The height of my ambition was to make a success in life as judged from a society standpoint; and this meant to make money. So I resolved to subordinate everything else to this purpose. My ultimate object, however, was honor and influence; but I learned that these were

nearly always obtained through wealth, every other avenue leading to them being closed to all but persons of extraordinary talents and ability.

I now began to figure on the other fellow's hunting another location instead of myself. With no competitor in Petville, I would be willing to make it my home until I accumulated sufficient wealth to enable me to float at the top of the pot in some large city. It was in the midst of a district conspicuous for the richness of its soil, which evidently would soon be occupied by a prosperous class of farmers. And its accessibility to the State Capital was another attractive feature.

I realized that to get rid of Dr. Gamboge would require deep laid plans skillfully manipulated. But I was willing to pit my college breeding, affable, suave manner, silk hat and fine clothes against his experience, force of character and natural ability.

Month after month passed and the struggle for the mastery went on. Occasionally I would gain a new patron from my competitor, yet he did not appear to be alarmed. But this indifference did alarm me, for it was anything but an indication that my hopes of displacing him were to be realized. Dr. Gamboge was, after all, a difficult man to oppose. While he was often criticized by the more exacting, he had no active enemies. He harmed no one and whenever his actions brought a rebuke, a droll, humorous joke, accompanied with a good natured, but probably ironical confession would more than right the wrong so far as any damage to him was concerned.

During twelve long months, while my acquaintances were not aware of anything extraordinary transpiring in my mind, I was vacillating between bull dog tenacity and complete despair. My mind was on a constant strain. I was determined to keep up appearances in the way of externals, but in order to do so on my small income, I was obliged to economize to an embarrassing degree. Had to abstain

from entertainments, decline wedding and party invitations. I suffered for underclothes while a silk hat, fine neckties and gold shirt studs adorned the exterior. But I generally turned to good account my inability to attend entertainments by pretending that press of business prevented me from doing so.

Several times when I was on the point of succumbing to what seemed to be the inevitable, good luck threw a case into my hands that put some money in my pocket; the crisis would again be postponed; and I confess that occasionally other things brightened my life and furnished temporary relief to my wearied mind. Three times during this memorable year of uncertainty, a little square, white envelope came flying across the western prairies on wings of mercy to help me forget.

Soon after the beginning of my second year in Petville I was showing unmistakable evidence of prosperity. My reputation and practice took on a healthy growth; and like a rolling snow ball as they became larger their facilities for growing were increased. This inspired me with confidence, and I was able to make a better appearance both personal and professional.

Dr. Gamboge knew that the enhancement of my prospects meant a decline to his, for we were doing practically all the practice in the neighborhood. It was not very long till he showed signs of being discouraged and going down; then did I extend a friendly hand? No! Following the custom, I used my foot, metaphorically speaking. Others joined me, and in a few months we had him kicked out of the town. He located in another place, took a regular course of medicine, and in a few years was doing a large practice.

I felt triumphant over his having to leave Petville, yet it was not much of a victory because the fighting was all on my side. While Dr. Gamboge was of an independent disposition, and firm in his convictions, he was not combative.

\*



## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE PHYSICIAN AND THE PEOPLE

With the field all to myself, I felt very independent and comfortable. Was laying up a few dollars at the end of each month. The advent of a new competitor was not among my day dreams, so secure was I in my position; but my surprise and chagrin may be imagined when I read the following in the Weekly Democrat:

"Dr. Ford, who has been practicing medicine at Hopton, is going to locate in Petville the first of January. We predict for him a good business in due time, for the doctor is a well qualified physician and a genial gentleman."

This was not the pleasantest information I could have received. My tranquility was not a little disturbed. Why should news of such offensive flavor obtrude itself on my peace of mind? I hoped it might be only a flying rumor, but it proved too true. Yet I was not in a position to complain, because I had done exactly as this man was doing. An aggravating feature of the circumstance was that immediately after Dr. Ford opened his office I heard more than once that he was a graduate; and I wondered if it were not an insinuation against me, for I had reasons for suspecting that the fact of my not having a diploma had leaked out. At this time a considerable proportion of the practitioners in Iowa had not taken a complete course in medicine; there being no law regulating the practice of this profession.

Inasmuch as I was resolved to remain in Petville and build up a big practice and reputation, Dr. Ford's coming placed a new task before me; and I feared that I was facing a hard proposition. It would be a struggle at least. For

my new competitor to remain and earn a living meant the defeat of my plans. But to get rid of an educated physician who was also a pleasant gentleman, would require different tactics from those employed in the case of Dr. Gamboge. His having no vulnerable points, I would have to run the risk of using imaginary ones. I wished there were a few Fred Inteps in the neighborhood.

Dr. Ford was not long in gaining the confidence and patronage of some of the prominent and influential families in the neighborhood; but this only increased my vigilance, causing me to consider carefully my best interests both from an aggressive and defensive standpoint. I made a diligent study of the conditions and circumstances that affect the physician in his relations to the people. Every observing medical man knows this is a subject of unlimited scope. Its investigation reveals facts, that are to the laity, not only interesting and surprising, but startling and incredible. A good basis for an intelligent discussion of the subject would be the assertion that the amount of practice a physician has is not a reliable index of his qualifications and skill. While nothing is more common than an expression of opinion concerning the comparative ability of physicians, the people have very poor facilities for acquiring knowledge upon which to base their judgment; therefore their opinions are of very little value.

My opportunities for learning the social and business sides of the profession had been excellent. My two preceptors were astute observers of human nature and motives, and they were very free to relate experiences and observations. Many things I learned from them had already been verified in my experience. I was rapidly becoming convinced that the physician did not stand or fall on his merits. The people are very liable to condemn him when he deserves praise, and he is often credited with superior skill and ability when he exhibits inexcusable ignorance and incompetency. If they like him they are lavish with their



praises, but if they dislike him their criticisms are very apt to run even to slander. In some cases admiration extends to worship, and in others, opposition is carried to execration. The physician's admirers claim the right to laud him to the skies and defend him, right or wrong, and to smite his competitor with the rod of malice purely through prejudice.

It is not an uncommon circumstance for persons to deny a physician the right to professional existence because he happens to be in competition with one of their preference.

A stranger in a town containing a dozen or more doctors of various degrees of competency, inquiring even of intelligent citizens for the best doctor in town, is just as liable to be directed to one of the poorest as to the best. Satisfactory proof of the foregoing assertions will be produced further on in this story.

The people require the doctor to "know everything;" they talk of his reading up and keeping posted, yet if they ever know of his referring to his books in any particular case, as the lawyers usually do, before giving an opinion, they will at once convict him of ignorance and unworthiness. It requires stability of character and unusual conscientiousness for a physician to be constantly honest in his professional life, because his patrons often tempt him to be deceptive. For instance, if he tells them that the case is only a simple indisposition which will soon pass off and requires no medicine, they will go to another doctor who makes a great ado and prescribes a course of treatment involving considerable of a doctor bill, which is freely paid; while if the other doctor presents a bill for the good and proper advice he gave, there would be a stubborn protest. People are sometimes more willing to pay for an injury than a benefaction. But the deplorable feature of this circumstance is that the first doctor, wise and honest, is criticized and condemned for incompetency, while the other, is rewarded for deception and fraud.

As regards peoples' conduct toward physicians individu-



ally, justice is very uncertain; so much so that it becomes almost an accident. A physician may be treating a case properly, conducting it to a successful issue, when, through the suggestion of some — perhaps very ignorant — person, he is discharged and another employed, for no other reason than that the last one had always been their family physician. Yet if the blinding film of prejudice had been removed from the eyes of the family, they would have admitted that if they had dropped this old physician long ago, much of their money and some of their lives would have been saved.

My best thoughts and energies were directed to maturing a plan of campaign against Dr. Ford. A leading ingredient in my policy was to make a display of personal friendship toward him. I always expressed sympathy for him whenever anything adverse to his prospects happened, and was resolved never to be heard by but a few confidential friends, to speak of him in disparaging terms, yet bearing in mind that actions speak louder than words. The old adage, "Possession is nine points in law," inspired me with confidence and courage.

There is another remarkable fact along these lines, which at this time had not been presented to my mind, but very likely if my attention had been called to it, the unreasonableness and absurdity of it would have caused me to give it but little thought; but subsequent experience and observation compel me to acknowledge it is one of the wonders in connection with the practice of medicine. In a given number of physicians in almost any community there is one, and sometimes more, who has an unusual run of practice and holds the confidence of nearly the entire population. His name is a household word. "He can almost raise the dead." "If he can't save you, nobody can." "I'd rather trust my life in his hands than any doctor's I know of." "He's the best doctor in the county," are common expressions uttered of him. His office is the Mecca of the in-

valid population, yet their visits to him are as delusive as are the pilgrimages to the famous tomb in the Arabian desert. It is impossible to understand these circumstances fully, for these doctors are no more successful in the treatment of their cases, nor possess any more knowledge or skill in medicine, often not so much, as the average practitioners around them. Their personal appearance, conduct and demeanor are often not especially attractive. In trying to solve this mystery one gets disgusted and concludes that these doctors just happen to drop into a current that carries them onward and upward, while others of equal or superior ability drop into a stagnant pool, if not a downward current.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### A LITTLE TOO BOLD.

For the enlightenment of those who do not agree with the assertion that the medical profession does not always stand or fall on its merits, I will relate a circumstance which is not the only one of its character in the history of the profession.

Dr. Ford had a sick child under treatment and while he was some distance in the country the case took a serious turn, and the friends, believing it demanded attention before the doctor could return, called me. The alarm was caused by the child's excessive sleeping, which investigation led me to believe was produced by overdosing with Dover's powders. The discovery of what I took to be some of these powders remaining on the table furnished grounds for my opinion. It seemed evident that a mistake had been made; but whether through ignorance or not I did not know, nor did I know who had made the mistake, the doctor or the nurse. Following a precept of Dr. Starr, my first preceptor, I had tried to make it a rule of my life to shape my actions so as to reap some benefit from any serious mistake I should make, and now I proposed to turn the mistake of another to my advantage.

My inventive faculties were set to work. After putting things together and anticipating results, I remarked to the sick child's parents, in the presence of some neighbors, "You have called for my professional services and I have agreed to render them; therefore it becomes my duty to warn you of impending danger."

A pallor suddenly spread over the mother's face. She stared at me, then looked at her husband. "Why, doctor,



what do you mean?" Her voice was weak and tremorous.

"This child is suffering from an overdose of opium, as is indicated by the difficult breathing, weakness of the heart and extreme contraction of the pupils of the eyes. And it is well known to the medical profession that the young child cannot bear even what might be considered a very small dose of this drug."

"I've been suspicioning," said the mother, "that there was something wrong, but we have had a great deal of confidence in Dr. Ford; he seemed to understand his business, but if he has made such a serious mistake, our confidence will be shaken."

Desiring to send the alarm up to the highest pitch, I said, "You haven't heard the worst yet, Mrs. Page."

Reaction, resulting from chagrin and anger toward Dr. Ford, had brought back the color to the woman's face, but this statement made it paler than ever. She gazed at me speechless. My heart almost failed me, but knowing it would not do for me to back down now, I continued, "It is evident that the drug hasn't reached its full effect yet."

"O, doctor! you don't say she'll get still worse? Carrie, darling." She stooped over and kissed the child.

"It will be impossible to prevent the child from growing weaker before the opium has spent its force; but I think I'll be able to pull her through to a favorable issue."

"I do hope you will, doctor, and if you do, we'll be under everlasting obligations to you."

"Yes, said the father, "it was our intention only to call you in temporarily, but now you may take permanent charge of the case."

Before announcing my predictions I had laid plans for their justification. A bold stroke of policy, if it proves successful, adds wonderfully to a man's influence and power, but its failure is sure to be disastrous. I had generally acted cautiously and moved on the safe side, but in this affair I went on the principle, "nothing risked nothing

gained." The reader will understand why it was with a trembling hand and serious misgiving that I put out some very large doses of Dover's powders for the Page child for the purpose of putting it still nearer death's door, expecting thereby to prove the accuracy of my predictions and my superior wisdom and also place a greater stigma on my competitor. In order to avoid suspicion that I was giving the same powder that Dr. Ford had given, I slyly mixed pulverized charcoal with it.

After writing directions I left the house, promising to call again in the evening. During the afternoon I thought out a plan to add another chapter to my scheme. Knowing that two young men who were boarding at the hotel had decided to apply for board at Mrs. Plotter's, I induced them to take supper with me that evening, and, as I intended, they engaged permanent board with Mrs. Plotter before leaving the house. This incident was followed later in the evening by the following conversation:

"Mrs. Plotter," said I, "you and I have been reciprocating favors for some time, and I think we have found it mutually profitable."

"Yes," replied the landlady, "and I am obliged to you for the two new boarders you brought me this evening; they will make a desirable addition to my family."

"Nothing affords me more pleasure than to help a worthy woman in a business way, and now I'm going to give you an opportunity to do a good turn for me."

"I would be pleased to accommodate you, doctor, what would you have me do?"

"You remember seeing Dr. Ford pass here this forenoon?"

"Yes, I do," Mrs. Plotter replied.

"And of course you noticed that he required the entire width of the sidewalk?"

"Was he under the influence of liquor?" was the quick, anxious reply.



"Well, now," said I, "I don't want to be too pointed in my remarks, but he made quite a serious mistake at Mr. Page's an hour or so after he passed here, and I was called there this afternoon on account of it. I'm sure that if they have corroborative evidence that he was not in a fit condition to attend patients, I will have a permanent hold on the Page family's patronage. Mrs. Page is a good friend of yours, and if you could make it convenient to slip up there this evening and drop a word on the subject, you'll be putting a nice, big shining feather in my cap."

Mrs. Plotter, as usual having an eye to business, said, "And it may be the means of feathering my nest, too."

Both of us realizing the delicateness of the subject, dropped it right here; but we understood one another, and the scheme was carried out to perfection; yet it is with the utmost remorse and contrition that I come to the climax of this incident. Many years have elapsed, but it seems that with each year another cord is added to the cat-o-nine-tails that lashes my conscience every time the awful tragedy is brought to my mind. I spoke truly — too truly — to Mr. and Mrs. Page when I told them they had not heard the worst. The worst was away beyond my anticipations. I only intended to administer enough of the powder to put the child in a condition that would cast reflection on Dr. Ford and bring praises to myself for saving it; but the child succumbed to my very large and frequent doses of Dover's powder.

For several years this circumstance did not trouble me. I was not keeping the fire of conscience alive within me, but persuaded myself to be content with the idea that it was the disease or Dr. Ford's medicine that killed the child, but now, when I am more competent to appreciate the realities of life, this terrible crime is a burden on my conscience. But I gained my point. The Page child's death was attributed by some to Dr. Ford's ignorance and by others to his intoxication; Mrs. Plotter's story had its effect. A good deal



of interest was manifested in the case. Several of Dr. Ford's friends were active in his defense but a majority of the community condemned him. I viewed the matter only from a business standpoint and took great satisfaction in the fact that I was the gainer in the affair.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### SOMEWHAT DISCOURAGED.

"Doctor, did you have to try the muddy roads to-day?" I knew this was an invitation to step into the parlor as I was retiring from the supper table. Mrs. Plotter was seated in a beautiful little rocker, a recent birthday present from her admiring boarders.

"Here Doctor, take this chair," she said as I entered the room.

"Keep your seat, Mrs. Plotter."

"No, I want you to see what a nice present you gentlemen made me."

I sat down. I had managed in a round-about way to let her know that I was the instigator of the plan to make her a birthday present, and, as was intended, she was feeling under obligations to me. After complimenting her on the fact that she deserved special recognition from her patrons, our conversation ran into the subject that just now concerned me most.

"Do you think," Mrs. Plotter asked, "that Dr. Ford's practice is growing now?"

"Perhaps," said I, "he gains a new patron occasionally, but then he loses one now and then, too," was my reply. "What effect," I continued, "will the Page episode have on his reputation?"

"It evidently has turned some of his admirers against him; but," Mrs. Plotter went on, "the trouble is, some of his influential admirers are vigorously defending him in that affair, and they deny that he was drunk when the alleged mistake was made."

Mrs. Plotter was very positive in her manner and her

countenance showed a spirit of rebuke. She said, "It was a mistake to start the story about the intoxication. It won't do to be too specific in such a charge as that; the accused may prove an alibi."

I admitted in my heart that I was a subject for rebuke, for it was shown that Dr. Ford called at Page's on his way home from the country and therefore did not stagger by Mrs. Plotter's. I wanted to change the subject, but was not allowed to.

"Yes," I said in reply to a remark of Mrs. Plotter's, "two doctors could make a living here, but I am determined to build up an unusually large practice, but with the business divided between two of us, this will be impossible. I expect my friends to help me in my undertaking. In this age of enterprise, competition and struggle for the ascendancy — yes, even for self-defense — success means reciprocity in business affairs."

"Then, I take it," said Mrs. Plotter, "that you intend either to run Dr. Ford out or leave here yourself?"

"It would be poor policy, Mrs. Plotter, perhaps fatal to my plans, for me to be too outspoken in this matter, but I expect my friends to understand my desires without the necessity of committing myself in words."

"Dr. Fussanfeathers, we are not going to let you leave here."

This declaration was made in such a positive way and accompanied with an expression so serious that I felt a cheerful thrill of encouragement pervade my being. The speaker's eyes flashed a volume of enthusiasm.

"While we have to admit," Mrs. Plotter continued, "that you are handicapped for want of age, diploma, etc., I'm sure that with the aid of your friends you will be able to triumph over Dr. Ford."

"If there were enough people in the neighborhood of your sentiments and influence I should have no fear for the outcome."



Notwithstanding Mrs. Plotter's manifest friendship and assurance, her remarks concerning my handicap were somewhat discomfoting. They aroused a feeling of suspicion that my youth, incomplete education and single blessedness were being used to my injury. However, they stimulated me to say,

"Now, Mrs. Plotter, to be frank but strictly confidential, I would rather stay here, but my actions will depend on my friends. Dr. Ford evidently intends to remain here, and unless something turns the current in my favor I shall leave."

"Have you any definite plans in view for accomplishing your purpose?"

"There are many influences," I said, "that bring patronage to a physician and as many others that drive it away. Reputation is the main thing, and this is made up by what the people say of him, and we come right to the point when we ask how to induce the people to say the right things—"

"The right thing," interrupted Mrs. Plotter, "for them to say is that he is a good doctor."

"Yes," I said, "more than that, Mrs. Plotter, they must say that he is the best doctor in the county, or the state, perhaps. But what will cause them to say this? Their actual knowledge of his professional ability?"

"Yes, or I suppose they will have to go by his general reputation."

"Very well; then you admit that what one says depends on what others say. Fact is, there are very few original opinions about the qualifications and skill of a physician. Only a very small per cent of the people think for themselves on this subject. Some one makes an expression in favor of a new doctor in the town, another repeats it, then another, and all at once nearly the whole community fall in line like a flock of sheep after the 'bell wether,' and with but little more intelligence, and continue to echo and re-echo the opinion until they talk him into a great reputation and

practice. Yet, on the other hand, that same person might have expressed an unfavorable opinion which would have been used the same way against him by the same flock of sheep."

"Then," said Mrs. Plotter, "you think a doctor's success in building up a practice is a haphazard affair?"

"To a certain extent it is; for it depends on circumstances and conditions outside of his qualifications. The physician himself often controls the situation. He does so to the degree in which he is able to manage the people through his diplomacy and shrewdness. This includes the wise employment of helpers in molding public sentiment in his favor."

Having discovered that Mrs. Plotter was made of first class material for a physician's henchman, I proposed to give her some hints that would add to her usefulness. My remarks were based on instructions from shrewd Dr. Clark, my second preceptor, and observations in the conduct of other physicians who had attained success through scheming, together with my general knowledge of human nature. I knew that Mrs. Plotter would enlist others in my behalf. She listened attentively to my remarks, and then said,

"It is easy to see how a doctor's friends and admirers can talk him into a practice, and on the other hand it is just as easy for them to talk him out of practice, unless he is firmly established."

It was not long after this conversation till I could see that it was bearing fruit. Others joined her in a boom for me and a crusade against Dr. Ford. Some of them were unconscious of the fact that they were hired tools, receiving as their compensation only occasional bits of courtesy and flattery. Others were remunerated more openly. I made liberal deductions on the bills of some, and paid the little local newspaper in cash for complimentary notices of my cases, especially those of a surgical character. The paper had a hard struggle to earn a living, and therefore was always ready to sell its influence regardless of consistency.



Occasionally the fact would leak out that my medical education was limited, but the editor often helped me to counteract this drawback by reporting my attendance at the County and State Medical Society meetings — often, though, when I had not been near them — stating that I took an active part in the transactions.

Dr. Ford and I struggled on for more than a year, unable to tell which had the ascendancy. Finally he became discouraged and moved to another location; his excuse being that he did not care to remain where he had to be constantly defending himself. He left me poorer than he found me, for I had spent a large portion of my income in advertising and keeping up appearances.

I now had the field all to myself, yet I was not happy. The dread of a new competitor was the source of considerable annoyance. I was afraid some well equipped physician, with a disposition as aggressive as my own, would locate on my territory. I did not feel equal to such a condition of things. After securing what I had schemed so hard for, a field without opposition, I was just as discontented as ever. Man is always striving to have his desires gratified, but gratification is deceptive. The attainment of one ambition creates others. A good friend of mine, knowing my trouble, showed me a nice little poem expatiating on the beauties of contentment, but the sentiment was so opposed to my life plan that I showed her the following paragraph from Bovee:

“One contented with what he has done stands but small chance of becoming famous for what he will do. He has laid down to die. The grass has already grown over his grave.”

A retrospective view of my life showed that my most restless days were when I should have been satisfied and full of encouragement.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### A BIT OF NEWS.

On a Sunday morning during the unsettled condition of my mind as mentioned above, I sat down to resume a correspondence that had been carried on at irregular intervals for three or four years. It was one of those mornings when nature seems to open the floodgates of her heart to pour out the elements of cheer and happiness to animate creation. The atmosphere had been purified the day before by a heavy shower followed by a brisk north wind. The combined effects of a bright sun and a mild breeze was both soothing and tonic to the soul. If there ever is a time when a man can be at peace with all the world, jovial with friends and sympathetic with the unfortunate, it is on a day like this.

I wrote in part as follows:

My dear Gertrude:

You will find the explanation of this particular style of address further down the lines. How are you this beautiful Sunday morning? Hope you are as happy as I am and feeling as well. I can't see any reason why you should not be. You have so many things to be proud of and keep you in good spirits. It has been so long since your last letter. Why are you so dilatory about answering my letters?

\* \* \* \* \*

I am getting along finely in my practice. Have about all I can do, and of course I am making money. And as the population increases my business will grow for I have no competition, nor is there any danger of my having any. I have already downed two competitors and run them out of town, and feel confident that I will be able to do the same

with any others who dare to locate here and undertake to compete with me.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have many good friends who do all they can to help me build up a reputation; but they tell me there is one very important thing that I lack — something that would be a great help to me in controlling the situation. I admit what they have reference to is something every good man ought to have, but I resolved a long time ago that I would be very particular never to procure this article until I found one that exactly suited me. You no doubt have, ere this, surmised my meaning.

\* \* \* \* \*

I intend to go to Philadelphia in October to attend another course of lectures. On the trip I shall stop at Jamburg a few days, and of course I anticipate a pleasant visit with you. Your company has always been so enjoyable. Even your letters are better company to me than a personal visit could be with any other woman on earth. I know I never would tire of your constant companionship.

\* \* \* \* \*

And now, in closing, I will say that I shall not expect to wait so long for an answer. Tell me all about Jamburg and especially about yourself.

Very sincerely,

Your friend,

Reuben Fussanfeathers.

This letter was quite different from any other I had ever written. I wanted to make an impression. My former letters to Gertrude were of a social character, simply; and they were few and far between. But I did not know exactly why it was; supposed perhaps it was on account of a disposition on the part of both of us to manifest an independent spirit. I have always had an inclination to appear independent, whatever might be my real feelings. I imagined my fair correspondent was waiting and perhaps anxious for



me to make decided advances, and now I concluded that she had waited long enough; hence this purpose to make an impression.

I waited patiently a reasonable length of time for an answer, and then, instead of receiving a white square envelope, there came my regular copy of the Jamburg Journal which contained this item:

"An important social event at Oak Knoll will be announced before long."

What a sensation! I had attempted to create an impression, and now, was this item the result of the impression? I could think of no other interpretation at first; but a second thought brought misgivings. What were the facts? had Gertrude acted under the assumption that it was all right between her and me, and dropped a word to her friends, that had, through some ones indiscretion, leaked out and got into the newspapers? Now, if that be the case I had better give up my plans for attending medical college and get ready for that "important event" at Oak Knoll.

For a few days I was among the first at the postoffice after the arrival of the eastern mail. Finally the square envelope came and my eagerness to get at its contents can better be imagined than described. But what did I find — a long epistle of reciprocal sentiment? Here it is, every word:

Reuben Fussanfeathers,

Dear Sir:

Your kind letter of September 2d was received in due time. I appreciate your friendship very much; but, owing to circumstances that will be known at the proper time, I request the discontinuance of our correspondence.

Very respectfully,

Gertrude Stover.

At the end of the last sentence I held my breath about a minute. Not only that, but I was motionless for a much longer time; and my thinking apparatus was stagnated. The



spell finally passed off and I began to reason. Of course, in my absence that detestable railroad agent had supplanted me in the affections of those hazel eyes, black hair and fair complexion. Yet I might be mistaken in the whole affair. The statement in the newspaper may mean just what I surmised, and this little note may be a ruse of Gertrude's to test the strength and depth of my interest and devotion to her. Yet I was unable to extract much comfort from the circumstances by any system of reasoning that I could employ. In a few days when time and attention to other matters were giving me some respite from my painful anxiety, I found in my box at the postoffice another white, square envelope. The post mark was Jamburg, Pennsylvania. At first sight I experienced a thrill of delight, but the envelope was a little larger than usual and the superscription did not suggest hazel eyes. It was an elegant, bold hand; looked as if written by a professor of penmanship. I studied several minutes before opening it. Had a kind of intuition that inside there was a surprise. Repairing to my office and carefully cutting it open, I pulled out another envelope — a fine white one, unsealed! This told part of the tale. Could I divine the rest? The Journal's statement about Oak Knoll was true, but my interpretation of it was not — I was not in it. Now I had another spell. It was some time before I had the strength or courage to extract the contents of the inside envelope; before doing so I uttered imprecations on Bob Holmes. He certainly had used unfair means to beat me. If jealousy ever reached a climax it was now at that point in my heart. I was tempted to exercise my contempt for the fellow by burning the announcement without reading it, but respect for the Stover family forbade this. I took out the beautiful folder and read: "Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Stover announce the marriage of their daughter, Gertrude, to Albert Bruce. At home in Des Moines, Iowa, after October twelfth, eighteen hundred and seventy-four."

There was a mixture of disappointment, gratification and regret with a sprinkling of shame in my heart. A wonderful change suddenly came over me. I could excuse Albert Bruce and exonerate Robert Holmes, but it was with great difficulty that I forgave myself. A little reflection showed that I had acted very foolishly. How little I knew about the real situation!

## CHAPTER XXV.

### SOME ADVICE.

As to the marriage, it seemed as if this was one of those sudden matches; but my impression was without foundation. The following conversation between Gertrude and her mother, shows that serious deliberation had preceded the engagement. A year before the wedding Gertrude entered the sitting room with a note in her hand and said, "Mother, here's an invitation to attend a reception at Judge Kern's Tuesday evening."

"Well, that's nice," remarked Mrs. Stover.

"But," said Gertrude, "I have an engagement for that evening to entertain Mr. Bruce."

Gertrude's mother looked at her with an interested expression. Her eyes were asking questions. They were saying, "Can I discover anything in my daughter's manner that will reveal the depth of her interest in Albert Bruce? Would she forego the pleasure of that party for the sake of his company here at home? Or would she just as soon have his visit postponed?"

The daughter, too, was waiting for an indication. She watched her mother's face. Gertrude was the first to break the silence.

"But then Albert and I understand one another so well I can have him come some other evening."

"That depends on circumstances," the mother suggested.

"It seems to me," she continued, keeping her eyes on her needle-work, "that you and Mr. Bruce are getting considerably interested in each other."

Gertrude hesitated a while and said, "Mother, I've been thinking the time has come when I ought to know how you



and father would feel about it if our mutual interests and attachment had reached a serious stage and were still growing."

This replaced the mediative, inquiring expression in Mrs. Stover's face with one of animation and pleasure.

"It is a great satisfaction, to know that you have regard for your parents' feelings on the subject. But this, of course, is a matter of secondary importance."

Gertrude took up a book and turned the leaves absently, wondering what she might properly say next; at the same time wishing her mother would say something. Mrs. Stover continued her occupation, apparently with interest, but really trying to think of the right thing to say. If she only knew at what stage the courtship had arrived. She remarked, "If a young woman is sure of a young man's intentions, then she has a guide for her conduct."

With emotions that affected her voice and with deep seriousness depicted on her countenance, Gertrude said, "I know Albert's intentions."

Wishing to relieve the strain, Mrs. Stover asked in somewhat vivacious tones, "Do you know your own intentions?"

Gertrude's smile, which her mother caught with wide open eyes, was answer enough. The latter added, after they both had indulged in a cheerful laugh, "How is it, Gertie, with you and Albert, is the question settled?"

"The question," Gertrude replied, "hasn't been directly put, but I am glad the opportunity has presented itself for me to inform you that I have been warned to be prepared to answer it in the near future. And now, Mother, I want you to express yourself freely."

"Well, daughter, under certain circumstances I might have a desire to influence you in an affair of this kind, but in this case I am willing to leave it entirely with you."

"So far as I am concerned," said Gertrude, "the question has been settled for some time; yet I have felt all the time

that a failure to get yours and Father's assent might influence my actions."

Gertrude was standing on the floor, and at the end of the sentence her mother rose, threw her arms around her and kissed her affectionately but said nothing. Other organs than the tongue sometimes express feelings better than it could. When the daughter saw great big tears rolling down her mother's cheeks, she too, burst into joyful weeping. This mutual confidence and sympathy was refreshing. Conversation was resumed. It was cheerful but earnest.

"It is all important for young people contemplating such a step to comprehend the situation."

"Yes, Mother," replied Gertrude, "I realize that it is a serious matter."

"It is impossible," said Mrs. Stover, "to be sure of consequences, for a woman does not know herself, then how is she to understand and interpret a man. But this doesn't excuse her from striving to learn all she can. The 'before and after' conditions should be weighed and contrasted. Before marriage people meet under favorable circumstances, for the purpose of enjoying each other's company. They and their friends do everything to make it pleasant. The best foot is put foremost; after marriage, comes the battle of married life. It is quite different then; special effort to please is liable to be supplanted by other interests; there is not so much dissembling; natural propensities assert themselves; the neat, affable, kind suitor may now be a careless, brusque, unaccommodating husband; and the tidy, lovable, charming sweetheart may be a frigid, slovenly, indifferent wife."

"But may not these conditions be avoided?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Stover, "before marriage, but they are not very easily remedied afterwards."

"Do you think, Mother, that marriage is a lottery?"

"Not necessarily. This feature of the affair may be



avoided through exercise of good judgment and self-control."

After a pause Gertrude said, "Your remarks are becoming very interesting; go on, I want all the light I can get on the subject."

Mrs. Stover resumed, "When a woman is deliberating on a marriage proposition she should carefully consider two phases of the question; first, her natural feelings, and attractions toward the man himself, personally and individually; and then his social, moral and intellectual standing. She should be sure that they will be congenial in every particular, socially, morally and physically. Too many women are governed by impulse and physical attractions. These are all right so far as they go, but they are not sufficient."

"Are moral, intelligent women controlled by these influences?"

"Too many of them are; but it is dangerous. There are women who are not satisfied until they meet a man who has a powerful magnetic influence over them. Their first impulse is to fall into his arms and exchange caresses with him. Shun this; it is not love, it is lust."

Gertrude had become a very enthusiastic listener. These matters had, for some time, been right to the front in her heart. She asked, "What do you think of the sentiments, 'love at first sight'; and 'there's just one person intended for us?'"

"Just one person intended for us! How supremely absurd to a clear, practical mind. It is a species of superstition and a source of a great deal of unhappiness. How are we to tell who is intended for us? Intended by whom? Divine providence? Then are God's plans thwarted in case of an improper marriage? I have too much faith in His wisdom to believe such nonsense. How often we see a woman fall in love with a man; her devotion is remarkable; and no argument or human influence could dissuade her from marrying him; she thinks he is the one intended for



her; but not long after their marriage she is brought to the depths of humiliation, reveals their incongeniality and acknowledges her mistake by suing for a divorce — or was it God's mistake? Impulse unaccompanied by reasoning in matrimonial affairs is dangerous, so is love at first sight. If a woman be drawn to a man through magnetic influence and suave manners, she is in need of advice from one who understands human nature. Safe conclusions can be arrived at only after due deliberation. There should be a blending of souls, harmony of tastes, a similarity in social, religious and literary inclinations and unlimited confidence in each other's integrity."

"How necessary it is," said Gertrude, "for people to be careful about these things."

"But," replied her mother, "in a majority of cases they are not. Many a woman exercises less care in choosing her life companion and the father of her children than she does in the selection of garden seeds. She doesn't look beyond personal appearance and financial standing. She should weigh his moral and mental character and personal habits. These make the man, and they are what command the respect and love of a good woman."

Gertrude lost her timidity, and talked freely on this delicate subject. "I have heard some discussion of this question before," she commenced, "but some think that if physical attractions were not allowed to have their influence, that is, if the question were to be decided by reasoning, few women would get married until comparatively late in life, owing to the trials of married life."

Mrs. Stover hesitated at this unexpected remark, and then said, "Married life often brings hardships, but if both parties comprehend the situation and appreciate their duties toward one another, these trials may generally be reduced to the minimum, and the hardships peculiar to matrimony will be associated with pleasures and comforts that will almost neutralize them. But I don't believe there is

much ground for the theory you mentioned, for every normal person of mature age longs for one of the opposite sex to whom he may lay bare the heart, and until this blessing is secured there is an aching void that makes character incomplete and life unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, I would say that a woman should never marry a man until she is satisfied that he loves her with a love that would protect her as he would protect himself, nor until she loves him, not with that impulsive, sensual love which deceives so many women and makes their lives miserable, but with that rational, sensible love which grows stronger as life advances and the material person wears out."

"Mother," said Gertrude, "I have enjoyed your lecture very much." She smiled and added, "You ought to take to the platform. Your theories do not seem unreasonable."

"I was governed largely by them myself, and have never regretted it."

"I think father was, too."

This remark of Gertrude's accompanied with a ha! ha! brought a pleasant smile from her mother, who continued, "These suggestions were prompted by the question under consideration, and now, daughter, trusting that you, too, will allow these principles to guide you, I am willing to leave the matter to your own judgment. My opinion of Albert Bruce warrants me in doing so."

Gertrude was happy, and with a voice and expression bordering on the ecstatic, she said, "Mother, you will not be disappointed."

"I trust," said Mrs. Stover, "that you will always remember that the necessity for care and vigilance in these matters does not end at the marriage altar. The happiness and success of married life correspond with the degree to which the husband and wife observe their obligations and duties. No other conditions in life demand so much forbearance and self-denial, and failure to exercise these qualities often leads to serious trouble. The wife has occasion

to exercise them oftener than her husband, because the latter, feeling a greater responsibility for the welfare of the household, is oftener provoked into injudicious conduct. Pope lays down a good rule for wives to follow:

"She who ne'er answers till a husband cools,  
Or, if she rules him, never shows she rules;  
Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,  
Yet has her humor most when she obeys."

"I believe," said Gertrude, "that few women realize the responsibility they assume when they get married."

"And," said Mrs. Stover, "a great many do not, even after raising a family."



## CHAPTER XXVI.

### A MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING.

Assuming that the reader might be interested in what Albert and Gertrude thought of one another a few days before the conversation related in the preceding chapter, we will put our ear to the key hole of the Stover parlor:

"Yes," said Mr. Bruce, "While I believe a proper union of the sexes requires a spontaneous attraction, which cannot be defined as anything but passion, a kind of magnetism — physical charm — I could not consent to marry a woman unless she possessed an abstract individuality that I could admire; mental qualities that would interest and entertain me; and an integrity that would make her trustworthy."

"It is easy for me to agree with you, Mr. Bruce. Physical attractions cannot be ignored, but they are not permanent; they soon deteriorate and fade away; and then there is nothing left to enjoy, while the latter qualities you mentioned grow stronger and fuller as life advances; and what is more to be admired than beauty of character?"

"The right thinking, aspiring man not only wants a woman whose person attracts him, but whose face will shine on him and whose individuality and character will inspire him."

As Mr. Bruce uttered this sentence his physiognomy was radiant with animation. Gertrude's countenance was serious but not dull. She was reading Albert's thought. "Mr. Bruce," she said, "your ideal points high. I think you shoot above the heads of most women."

"Not above some of my acquaintances," Albert replied.

Gertrude was sure he had reference to a certain young lady and she knew who it was, but she, modest, self-de-

Gertrude Stover, had enough of human nature to set her mind in motion to draw out a more definite meaning.

"I think you'll have to go outside the county to find your ideal."

"No Gertrude, not even outside the town."

The anxious, communicative little smile that accompanied this reply was sufficient explanation, and Gertrude became uneasy. She wondered if a climax were not in sight — just what she wanted, but she dreaded it. She was not ready for it. The two young people understood each other pretty well. There is sometimes a suggestive current connecting the minds and hearts of individuals which furnishes a medium of thought and feeling almost as reliable as the telephone wire. They were both satisfied and the conversation turned.

Mr. Bruce stepped to the window, put his head out and said, "This is a perfect night. The moon and stars couldn't look more friendly."

"Nor could the temperature," joined in Miss Stover, "be more accommodating. It is enough to make one forget the troubles of life."

"And make new promises to be good," added the other.

"On such a night," said Gertrude, "one ought to be willing to forgive all his enemies."

"In such a night as this,

When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees  
And they did make no noise; in such a night,  
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls,  
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents  
Where Creusa lay that night."

Gertrude, too, gave vent to the poetical emotion which the case inspired:

"In such a night,

Stood Dido with a willow in her hand  
Upon the wild sea-banks and waved her love  
To come again to Carthage."

Albert continued the dialogue:

"In such a night,  
Medea gathered the enchanted herbs  
That did renew old Eason."

"In such a night did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew."

At this Albert couldn't resist the temptation to change a line:

"In such a night, I would, like Lorenzo, swear my love to you."

As the last words escaped his lips he threw his arms around Gertrude and essayed to kiss her, but she threw her head back and straightened her arms against him, looked him sternly, yet passionately, in the face for a moment; then her facial expression changing to merriment, she continued her quotations:

"I would out-night you, did nobody come;  
But hark, I hear the footing of a man!"

Albert's wit was ready with reply:

"Who comes so fast in silence of the night?"

They both burst into hearty laughter. Gertrude pulled away and sat down. Albert, placing his chair in the lover's position — a thing he had not attempted before — sat down, too, and said, "We are pardonable for getting on a Shakespearian strain —" "Yes," laughed Gertrude, "in such a night as this. I suppose you've seen the Merchant of Venice played?"

"Yes, twice."

Albert took Gertrude's hand in his, but she quickly withdrew it. Light conversation went on a few minutes. Albert reached for Gertrude's hand again, but failed to get it.

"Do you know," he asked, "what we were talking about half an hour ago?"

"I think my memory is at least thirty minutes long," Gertrude answered, with a smile.





"Is there any subject more interesting than the ruling passion?"

"I don't like," said Gertrude, "to look upon love altogether as a passion. Its more commendable attributes are grounded on principle and governed by reason."

"Yes, that's right; and I think I have a good reason for my love." Albert hitched his chair up a little closer and made a motion to take Gertrude's hand, but it was a little too quick for him. He followed it up; "I just want to see that ring."

"All right; I have no objection to your giving it a thorough inspection," removing the ring and handing it to him as she spoke.

"It's a beauty; you must have had it made to order."

"I did. It is made of gold a cousin of mine dug in Montana, and the set was sent to Mother from Brazil by a friend who discovered it himself."

"Now, let me put it back on your finger."

"No, I thank you. I will save you the trouble. I'm the most accommodating creature you ever saw."

Albert reached out his hand in an importuning manner.

"No," said Gertrude, "let me have it, please. I can put it on better than you can — and much quicker."

Mr. Bruce put the ring in his pocket, and, grasping Gertrude's arm, began, "What a fine specimen of —" Gertrude sprang up, stepped to one side and said, "Albert, you must not be naughty."

"What is the penalty for naughtiness in this house?"

"Boys will be sent home to their mammas for instruction in decorum if they are naughty."

"Then I'll be as submissive as a lamb. But it's time for me to go home anyhow; so good night." But instead of extending his hand, Albert raised both arms to throw them around Gertrude's waist; she caught his wrists and held them with a vice-like grip. He made a strong effort to release himself but was surprised at his failure. When the







"MR. BRUCE, I AM NOT PLEASED WITH YOUR BEHAVIOR."

young lady let go, he rubbed the red creases on his wrists and exclaimed, "Mercy! I haven't been accustomed to wearing such tight bracelets."

Gertrude smiled with mild satisfaction at the kindly punishment she had inflicted on her tormentor.

"Well," said Albert, "I'll go home now. Of course you won't want me to come again."

"Yes, I will want you to come again."

"Provided I behave myself?"

"O, I'll see to that."

"Good night."

As they shook hands Albert quietly encircled Gertrude's waist with his left arm and drew her to him, but with a graceful swing of her body she extricated herself, saying, "Mr. Bruce, I am not pleased with your behavior."

Albert stared at her with feigned surprise, but when he saw the crimson come to her face and her eyelids overflowing, his surprise was genuine. However, he felt that his self-rebuke was recompensed on recalling the line,

"Love is loveliest when embalmed in tears."

There was a short season of embarrassed silence. Gertrude Stover had passions and emotions as well as Albert Bruce. She also had ideas of propriety and self-control.

Placing two chairs together, Mr. Bruce said, "Come, now, Gertrude, let's sit down and talk a while."

When they were seated Albert began,

"Do you know what Shakespeare says about love?"

"He says a multitude of things on the subject, but I don't know what particular saying you have reference to."

"He says, 'If thou rememberest not the slightest folly that love did make thee run into, thou hast not loved.'"

"Shakespeare," replied Gertrude, "evidently speaks from his own experience, which, in this matter, according to history, is not altogether commendable. He also says, 'To be wise, and love, exceeds man's might; but I'"

there is nothing that demands the exercise of wisdom more than love. I agree with you, Gertrude, thoroughly; and I think we have ever showed more wisdom in love than I have in business."

Albert's smile as he spoke did not diminish the sincerity of his expression.

"You!" Gertrude exclaimed, "Are you in love?"

The sweetness of her voice and the sparkle of her eyes were beyond description; then how could Albert help answering,

"Yes, I am," in tones that sounded from the bottom of his heart.

"How much?" said Gertrude, with a serious smile.

"Love that can be weighed or measured is not worth taking to market," was the answer.

If there had been any doubts in the minds of these two people as to their attitude toward each other, they were removed at this meeting. The last words spoken by Mr. Bruce before saying good night were, "The next time I call, which will not be very long, I will have a question of special importance to ask you," and the sequel proved his good faith.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

### TRICKS OF THE TRADE.

The news from Jamburg made a material change in my program. It was the source of intense grief and worry. To be ranked as a disappointed lover, a class with which the world never sympathizes, but generally ridicules was very distasteful to me.

Yet after time for sober reflection, and having analyzed my feelings and motives, I came to the conclusion that I was not in reality a lover after all — only an admirer. I was dazed with Gertrude's beauty, brilliancy, popularity and the prominence of her family relations. It was these that interested and attracted me. I believed she would contribute to my honor and prosperity.

A few years later I was glad that this wooing was a failure for we were not adapted to each other. In order to have been congenial one of us would have had to change disposition. Our tastes would have run in opposite directions, which, owing to a marked degree of self esteem in both of us, would very likely have led to ruinous discord. These were consoling thoughts and very convenient ones, too. So I gave up the occupation of lover and settled down with one eye to business and the other on the feminine portion of the race, hoping to find one that would fill the bill. With my business eye I kept a constant lookout for possible competitors, for I knew that the promising future of Petville and the surrounding country was too tempting to the unsettled members of the medical profession for me to be left alone very long. I was not resting easy on the question of competition. An occasional flying rumor made me restless. I remembered too well the money, time, and nervous ex —

I had spent in getting rid of competitors, and when it was announced on good authority that Dr. Cole, a graduate from a medical college in Edinburgh, and also of Bellevue Medical College of New York, would soon locate in Petville, I could feel the cold chills running up my spinal column. A graduate from two of the most eminent colleges in the world! This meant another fight and a check in my eager pursuit of wealth, influence and honor. And then, my prospective competitor must have plenty of money or he would not have been to the expense of obtaining a second diploma. When he arrived I pretended not to be the least bit alarmed about the affair, but availed myself of the first opportunity to see him. I wanted to size him up. He proved to be a fine looking man, well dressed and about thirty years old. Inasmuch as I had valued personal appearances as highly as I did medical qualifications, I was obliged to look upon him as a man worthy of my steel.

In accordance with medical ethics, he called on me soon after opening his office. I found him to be a polite, affable Scotchman, but I felt pretty sure that his style and manner would not rush him into a practice in a hurry, with the plain, matter-of-fact people that he would have to deal with. There was some consolation in this prediction, and when I returned his call and discovered that he had a violin, a banjo, a flute, a chessboard, a deck of cards, a bird dog and a shot gun, my gratification knew no bounds. Without unnecessary delay I had an interview — incidentally (?) — with Mrs. Plotter. I told her — incidentally — about the musical instruments, dog, etc. She saw the point at once and before he had received his first professional call, more than one person was reiterating the statement that the "little Scotch doctor was too fond of music, cards and hunting to pay the proper attention to the practice of medicine. I paid the editor of the Petville Journal five dollars for publishing the following paragraph: "Doctor Cole evidently expects to hunt patients with his red Irish setter, and

then if he fails to frighten away the disease with his nostrums, he will draw his half dozen musical instruments and that siren voice of his on them and 'Make them forget their country and die in the ecstasy of delight.' "

This incident was taken up by my trained henchmen and used so skillfully as an instrument of ridicule and disparagement that in about two months he shook the dust of the town and located in one of the large western cities, where before the expiration of two years, he was occupying the chair of therapeutics in a leading medical college. Two years later while attending a meeting of the American Medical Association in that city, I was told by a local physician that Dr. Cole was one of the most popular professors in the college. I presume if I could have mustered up courage to call on him and reveal the source of his humiliation in Petville, he would have blessed me as his great benefactor. But as it was, he evidently thanked the editor of the Petville Journal for his good fortune, for, so far as I could learn I never was suspected as being implicated in the scheme that caused him to leave.

For a while after Dr. Cole's departure from Petville my mind was occupied in rejoicing over the fact that I had strung another competitor's scalp on my belt. I knew this victory would add to my influence and be a power in preventing the success of any other who undertook to acquire a practice in my territory. To still further increase my prestige, I summoned all my cunning and diplomacy in an effort to establish a reputation for superior ability and skill. My diploma, which I had obtained within the last year through a second course of lectures at Jefferson Medical College, and experience would now justify me in this undertaking; and the methods I employed and the success that attended them were very remarkable. The success itself, however, was not so remarkable as the ignorance and helplessness of the people which made it possible. No other profession affords such opportunities for deception and impo-



sition as the medical. It stands out in *alto rilievo* from all others in this respect. If a lawyer undertakes to gain a point by misrepresenting the law or circumstances or deceiving the jury in any way, his opponent or the judge on the bench immediately checks him; the minister who, through lack of mental culture or command of language, fails to instruct and entertain his congregation, soon finds that his ability is properly estimated; the musician cannot maintain a false reputation, because his success depends on the amount of pleasure he gives his hearers. He must show his ability; it cannot be concealed; and the incompetency of the civil engineer may result in a sentence to the penitentiary on account of lives lost through his incompetency; but when the doctor kills a six months old child with opium because he doesn't know that an infant can tolerate this drug only in doses very much smaller in proportion to its age than an adult can, what means have the friends for discovering the mistake? Or, if he lets a patient die from obstipation of the bowels while he is pouring laudanum into him— which would increase the trouble — for neuralgia, instead of relieving the trouble in the sensible way with heavy injections of water, he may, if he works the friends shrewdly get credit for prolonging the patient's life, instead of justly being prosecuted for malpractice if not manslaughter.

There is often a white deposit on and around the tonsils in follicular tonsillitis, though easily distinguishable from the false membrane of diphtheria, and if the doctor treats a number of these cases without any fatalities, calling it by the dreadful name of diphtheria, who is going to prevent his acquiring a reputation for superior skill in the treatment of this disease?

The above is only one branch of the various methods I employed to fool the people into the belief that I was a very great doctor. While those stereotyped ones so well known to the profession and a large portion of the laity, were on

my list, such as driving to the country in a great hurry when I had nothing to do, arranging to be called out of public meetings, and always pretending to be sleepy on account of being out so much of nights, etc., I invented new schemes with more or less success.

The impression that a physician is doing a large business exceeds every other influence in drawing patronage. Something was said in the earlier pages of this story about a large majority of the people not thinking for themselves, and the fact stated in the sentence above is ample proof of the assertion. Very few persons know the difference, or whether or not there is any difference in the skill of any given number of regularly educated physicians. I make this assertion knowing well that it is an unpopular thing to say. Very few outside the medical profession will believe it; but, reader, before allowing yourself to feel shocked, and indignantly declare that the author is presuming too much on the ignorance and stupidity of the intelligent, independent American people, wait a moment and ask yourself if it is not a fact that your reason for employing any particular physician was that you understood he had a large practice, or that this one or that one had told you he was a good doctor, or else because he drove a fine rig and put on a good deal of style. If you are hasty in your answer, it very likely will be in the negative, but after thorough deliberation, it will be different. You think your judgment is based on merit, but, unless you are as well informed on the subject as the physician himself, you do not know this species of merit when you see it. You say such things as stylish rigs and personal appearances have no influence with you; then you estimate a physician's ability by the opinion of others; but how do they form their opinion?? Just as you do. So ninety-nine per cent of the judgment of the comparative ability of physicians is without any reliable foundation.

Some of my advertising schemes were quite original. I occasionally went to towns in adjoining counties, stating to

my neighbors that I had been called on professional business. After returning I would visit another town and have its newspaper publish the fact (?) of my having been called to the first place. I did not have to repeat this trick very many times till the neighboring towns, getting the impression that I was a very prominent physician, actually called me to consult with the local doctors. And it was not long until patients outside of my legitimate range came to me for treatment. This proved a great advantage to my reputation. Another fruitful plan was to have all my office patients call on the same day and at the same hour, expecting them to report that "Dr. Fuzzanfeathers has an immense practice; his office is full every time I'm there." And by changing the day frequently, it was thought that every day was "my busy day."

After I got to keeping a boy to tend my office and team I would have him, about once a month, rush down to the depot just as the train pulled in and exclaim to the conductor, "Dr. Fuzzanfeathers wants you to please wait a minute for him; he has a professional call to the next station, but was too busy to get ready in time." The people thought a man that a railway train would wait for must be a very important, influential individual; but the bright silver dollar I handed the conductor had more influence than my importance.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### PERSONAL HISTORY.

My thoughts and time were not all occupied in scheming for prominence and attending patients. I became very much interested in social matters soon after the Jamburg surprise.

Dancing parties had become quite popular and the young man or woman who could not practice the Terpsichorean art missed a leading source of enjoyment. I had always belonged to this class — not from choice, however, but from necessity. My feet never seemed to act in harmony with the music, in consequence of which my attempts to learn to dance had been limited.

But at this time, I felt that, in order to be popular with my "set," I must be able to indulge in this amusement. But the undertaking proved somewhat embarrassing. My native talent for music being almost nil, and not having been cultivated, I had but little control over my feet in trying to induce them to "keep time;" but by converting my awkwardness into a joke as much as possible, the agony was alleviated to some extent so long as I confined my efforts to the square dances, but repeated blunders by a clumsy partner in a round dance is a thing not to be tolerated by a refined lady. It was evident that I was unpopular in the ball room, for I nearly always experienced some difficulty in procuring a partner, and then she often would propose to drop out before the number was finished.

I finally discovered an exception to the rule, in a young lady who was not only willing to stay with me to the end, but to take pains to teach me the step. On one evening she went with me entirely through three round dances. Occasionally

we would have to stop and start over again. I thanked her for her patience. She vivaciously replied,

"I know patients is what doctors like above all things."

This little witticism pleased me very much, and adding it to her forbearance and charitable treatment on the floor, I was disposed to take some interest in her. She did not seem to hold any prominence in society. Her circumstances and personal appearance indicated forced economy if not poverty, but her self-esteem and boldness afforded her a sort of recognition. She had come to Petville to live with relatives and teach music. This gave her a somewhat extensive acquaintance. But only for her unusual self-confidence and boldness, could she have accomplished anything in her chosen occupation, for she was almost totally destitute of native musical talent and her education in this art was limited to a little mechanical drill. But she had tact which enabled her to make a scanty living.

I met her in society on different occasions, and as she possessed a certain degree of physical attraction, and took special pains to entertain me, we soon became quite well acquainted. A mutual attachment seemed to grow pretty fast and I discovered that Miss Julia Pansy was occupying a prominent place in my thoughts and day dreams.

I could not understand it. Why should I become attached to a woman so very different from the one that I almost went insane over a few years before? The explanation was, congenialty. Our dispositions were quite similar. She possessed some traits that were particularly interesting to me. I liked her ambition, although it was not of an exalted character. The similarity of our tastes and inclinations caused us to become confidential friends. She revealed some very shrewd schemes for securing pupils and advancing her reputation as a music teacher. Believing she would be a useful helpmate, I asked her to marry me and there was no hesitancy in her acceptance, but circumstances necessarily delayed the consummation of our engagement.

Everything went on harmoniously — in fact, sometimes I found myself imagining that perhaps there was too much harmony; for I was afraid there was truth in the adage, "The course of true love never did run smooth." It actually worried me. How nice it would be to have a temporary misunderstanding — a lover's quarrel. It could do no permanent harm in the case of such strong attachments; and then a kissing and making up must be exquisitely delightful and lovely. I was finally gratified. There is one thing that we can always have in this world if we want it; I never knew a man or woman to go a hunting for trouble and fail to find it.

I called at Miss Pansy's home for an evening's visit. After the preliminary conversation she excused herself for a few moments and went upstairs. Noticing a white, square envelope on the table, post marked at a town in the south-western part of the state, and addressed to Miss Julia Pansy, in what I thought was a man's hand, my curiosity was instantly transferred into the proverbial feminine type. I wanted to know what it meant. I began to feel toward an imaginary rival as I had toward Robert Holmes. I nervously took out the contents and began to read; expecting to be warned by Miss Pansy's footsteps coming down stairs, in time to get the letter back in its place before her appearance on the scene; but to my great consternation, she came down a back stairway and stepped into my presence before I had time to do any more than to lay the letter on the table outside the envelope. I hoped she would not suspect me but think she herself had carelessly left the letter in this condition; but the expression of her face and her unusual manner during the evening convinced me that she knew what I had done. The letter so far as I read, was as follows, *verbatim et literatim*:

"My dear old frend July Panzy:

I reseaved your letter all rite. I was glad to here from you again and that you was haveing such good times teech-



ing musick and makeing so much munny. So you air going to marry a doctor air you, wont that be nise. I think its nise to be married if you dont have tu many kids. Ive bin married fore years and only got one and I hope to the lord it will be the last one. your letter made me think of the grate times we had when we used to work at the Parker House and fore of us girls roomd together. do you remember the time the land lord and one of the borders looked thru the transum and saw me and you trien to stand on our heads like we saw the cloun in the sircus do."

My visit was short and unsatisfactory. Conversation dragged. We were both in a pouting mood; each was wondering what the other was thinking. And when I was ready to leave, Julia did not put herself in the accustomed attitude for the departing kiss; yet I administered it, thinking it would not do to omit that part of the program, for we were engaged. But the osculatory act was without flavor, cold and spiritless.

I went to bed that night in a perturbed state of mind. I had promised to marry an ex-hash slinger and chamber maid! My ideal had been very high, but this seemed like humiliation. For a day or so I felt unsettled in my intentions and plans, as if a change were possible. Having a stubborn inclination to meet Miss Pansy, I invited her to take a buggy ride. The invitation was accepted, but not in that pleasing manner characteristic of her. I resolved however, that the ride should be in keeping with the day which was an unusually pleasant one. But we had not gone far till I was sure that my companion had not made the same resolution I had. She was not talkative and the corners of her mouth hung about an inch lower than usual. Her eyes looked into space; her mind was set on something. I undertook to drive away the spell by cracking jokes, but soon found that I had stirred up a hornet's nest. At my attempted witticism she smiled sarcastically and said,

"You think you're smart, don't you?"

When one of the horses switched his tail and bit at his mate, I said, "You, Mike! you ought to have better manners than to act that way when I have a pretty girl with me," glancing at my companion as I finished the sentence.

But she evidently did not like the expression, for she instantly blurted out, "That's no worse manners than to read —"

Of course I knew she had reference to my conduct a few evenings before, but I didn't ask her to finish the sentence. We were both feeling considerable embarrassment, but jogged along over the prairie roads like two icebergs floating down from Alaska.

One of the horses stumbled, dropping his head toward the ground. "What are you doing there," said I, "trying to stand on your head?"

This was enough. Miss Pansy was sure that I was hinting at the incident in the letter I stealthily read.

"Now, I'm not going to stand this any longer," she angrily said, "Let me get out; I'll walk home."

She grabbed the lines, and woman-like pulled unevenly, drawing the buggy off the grade, upsetting it and throwing us both into the ditch. Aside from smashing the buggy top, the damages were slight; only a disagreeable shaking up and soiled clothes. I held to the lines, and the horses not being frightened, we had nothing to do but adjust the buggy, get in and drive on, which Miss Pansy was very willing to do. The accident must have shaken all the peevishness and ill temper out of her, for as soon as we were seated in the buggy she laughingly remarked, "I guess the horses thought they'd stand us on our heads."

For a while I rejoiced over this accident; for, remembering instances where calamity had re-established friendly relations between disaffected parties, I concluded this was a blessing in disguise. But I was disappointed. We quarreled before going a mile.

"I think," said Miss Pansy, "it was contemptibly mean

in you to read that letter. No gentleman would do such a thing."

To be accused of not being a gentleman was too severe a test of my self-control.

"How do you know I read your letter?" I said.

"I saw you. But you'll never have another chance to read my letters. Remember that, now."

Feeling so positive that our relations were practically severed, I replied abruptly, "I suppose gentlemen must be very circumspect in the presence of hotel girls."

This was equal to dropping a live coal into a keg of powder. Miss Pansy's face was fiery red and sparks seemed to fly from her eyes. She trembled like a leaf; raised her hands to grab the lines, but remembered the accident a few minutes before.

"You have no room to say anything; didn't your landlady and landlord threaten to turn you out of your boarding house and office not very long ago because you couldn't pay your bills? Yes, and I heard the sheriff was about to take charge of your horse because you were starving him to death."

This was the last sentence Miss Pansy spoke to me for two months, during which time our engagement, so far as I was concerned, was considered off; but we were accidentally thrown into each other's company and our former relations were suddenly renewed. It was an easy thing to accomplish, for during the vacation of our engagement I came to the conclusion that I never would find another woman that would be so helpful to me as Julia Pansy, in consummating my plans and attaining the object of my ambition. I had observed, with great admiration, her shrewd methods in obtaining pupils for her music class, and also in holding a place in society. The buggy ride had furnished theoretical evidence of true love, and three months after that remarkable experience we were married.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

### A SYNDICATE.

With a diploma, and a designing wife I felt pretty well fortified against intruders on my territory or any obstacle that might come against my reputation. Yet I finally discovered that these alone do not afford absolute security. A man must possess within himself the true elements of success if he wants true success. Influences outside are treacherous. Shrewdly managed, they may for a time maintain a certain quality of thrift-sham success. Reputation and favorable circumstances will not properly reduce and heal a fractured femur. This requires practical knowledge, which I did not possess when Mrs. Holley fell and broke her thigh. And she is to this day a living, moving monument to my incompetency and carelessness. Every step she takes reminds her of that awful misfortune. It was a misfortune to me as well as her.

Had I made a worse mistake, and given her treatment that resulted in death through blood poison or some other complication, my ignorance and crime would have been buried six feet under the sod and forgotten, but this case turned a current of sentiment against me that threatened my prosperity. I tried to explain away the unsatisfactory results of my treatment, attributing it to the bad condition of the patient's blood and the nurse's failure to carry out my instructions; but still a good many people blamed me with Mrs. Holley's lameness. She had too many friends to suffer a serious injury without attracting considerable sympathy. She was one of those sweet Christian characters who have no enemies and but few critics; was always on the alert for an opportunity to say something that would add to

a fellow creature's comfort and happiness, or perform an act that let in more sunshine to some one's life. She did not believe that any human being was made to live simply for self. If necessary she would miss a meal herself to carry a refreshing draught to a thirsty brute. Her very presence inspired respect and veneration. To doubt her sincerity would seem a crime. Her beauty and physique were of the Martha Washington type. Distinguished looking, yet she would rather be good than great. She was a woman of general usefulness, but her special work seemed to be to lead her acquaintances heavenward.

Owing to the prominence and popularity of the family I feared the effects of my unsuccessful treatment of Mrs. Holley. Some severe criticisms followed, and when a physician was called over from the county seat a few weeks later to set a broken arm for a man whose team had run away with him, I viewed the situation with alarm. This was not all; I saw other evidences of an increased lack of confidence in me. Mrs. Plotter, shrewd Mrs. Plotter told me of a good deal of fault finding. These things annoyed me. Dreams of new competitors haunted me day and night. I had a serious talk with my wife about the matter.

"Can't you do something," she said, "to make up for this loss?"

"I don't know," said I, "what more I could do than I have been doing to keep up my reputation."

But this suggestion set me thinking. I went to my office, sat down and put my imaginative and inventive powers in motion. I must make a special effort — a vigorous effort — to effect a formidable standing in the community; make the people believe, or at least make them think they believe, that I am the ablest, most skillful physician in the county and equal to any in the state. Others have done so, why not I? This accomplished, all doctors will be deterred from attempting to establish themselves on my territory.

The result of my deliberations was a syndicate. A pecu-

liar, novel one — but as decided a syndicate as ever was organized. It was a monopoly syndicate. This concern was not only peculiar in its object, but in its organization and manner of operating. There were no officers, no formal meetings, no common capital, no written rules. It was to do business with the public; the people were to aid and abet it, yet they were to remain ignorant of its existence. It was a sort of "under-ground railroad" affair.

I knew there were others in the town who were just as eager to maintain a monopoly of their respective branches of business as I was, and it did not take long to enlist a druggist, a lumber dealer, a grain dealer and a few other co-workers in my peculiar enterprise. They readily agreed that in unity there was strength. Our pledge was written exclusively in cipher and was as follows:

"I solmenly agree to assist to the utmost of my ability the following named persons in maintaining a monopoly of their respective branches of business. I further agree never to cause the existence of this compact to be known to outsiders."

I at once became the self-appointed leader of this unique syndicate, and selected Jo Blaggar and Mr. Jehu Verbosago as my principal henchmen. While it was admitted that women could not be of much service in keeping out opposition grain dealers, bankers, etc., I prevailed on my partners to include Mrs. Plotter in the concern. I appreciated the influence of women in making or breaking a physician's reputation.

I was happy in the selection of helpers. Jo Blaggar and Mr. Verbosago were especially useful in the promotion of our syndicate. These two men were unique characters. They were as different in disposition and general appearance as a cow and a camel. In one respect only were they alike, and that was their eagerness to accumulate wealth. Their experience in this line had developed a shrewdness that qualified them for usefulness in our mutual admira-



tion society. Jo was a large man; coarse, vulgar and profane; never hesitating to make unpleasant remarks about his neighbors. Verbosego was considerably below the average in avoirdupois, unusually neat, and aimed always to be precise and circumspect. He tried to be accurate in the use of English, but a neglected education made his attempt at this a very sad failure. He was thoroughly satisfied with himself, except as to his size. He was conspicuous for his admiration of wealth and wealthy people. His avowed standard for measuring intelligence was dollars and cents. These traits were what actuated him constantly to exaggerate his own earthly possessions. One of his leading sources of pleasure was to exercise his conversational talents. His voice was affected and he tried to make it impressive and charming. It was wonderful, the volume of big words that could issue from his throat; but, unhappily, they were very liable to be used and pronounced improperly. It afforded him ineffable joy to surround himself with those you were willing to bear the affliction of his tedious verbosity and expatiate on his experiences.

Mr. Verbosego was a good, useful friend of mine, and I only make these remarks that the reader may understand him in the future.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### FRED INSTEP IN TROUBLE.

On opening my copy of the Jamburg Journal, which paper I continued to take in order to keep posted on the affairs of my old home town, I was shocked by the following item:

"We received a note from Fred Instep, Thursday morning, stating that he was going to leave on the next train for the west where he intended to locate to practice law. While we regret to lose such a bright, promising young man from our community, we are pleased to know that Fred is going where there are better opportunities for men with limited means, but plenty of brains, ambition and enterprise to rise in the world.

After the foregoing was set up we learned that the grand jury had indicted Fred Instep for seduction, but before a warrant could be served on him he left the country for parts unknown. This corroborates our remarks about Fred's being a promising young man — he had promised to marry the young lady."

It was with no small degree of regret that I received this news about my old friend, for I had always been hopeful that on his arrival at manhood, Fred would abandon his wild, dissipating habits, settle down to business and make a success in the world, which I believed but few boys more capable of doing. This event reminded me that I once heard his mother say she was "afraid that Fred would come to some bad end. But if he does it won't be my fault, for no mother ever took more pains to make her boy do right than I have with Fred." So far as amount of discipline was concerned, Fred had enough to make him a saint; but

this being an article in which quality is of more importance than quantity, the benefit to Fred was uncertain.

Mr. and Mrs. Instep were rivals in the chastisement of their children, and as Fred was more active and enterprising than the others, he received the largest share of attention. But, in a sense, he didn't seem to be appreciative; the last time I talked with him he made the sad remark, that the only things he felt in debt to his parents for were "the clothes he wore and the grub he ate," and that the cuffs, bruises, rebukes and threats he received had been paid for. Fred's parents were somewhat popular in their particular social circle, but those conversant with their domestic affairs knew they did not enjoy the happiest relations. Each seemed jealous of the other's comfort and convenience. Mrs. Instep was afraid that if she performed an act that afforded her husband any special pleasure there would not be sufficient compensation, and Mr. Instep thought he never was properly rewarded for special attentions and favors to his wife. They were constantly antagonizing each other in act if not in words; at the same time wondering why they couldn't be happy like other people. Each blamed and opposed the other's behavior but they never thought to conquer themselves. "Thank you," was an unknown expression in the Instep household. Mrs. Instep was extremely pleasant in society, had an abundance of smiles and distributed them freely among her associates, but the stock was always exhausted before she got around to her husband. Nor did she take any pains to replace absent buttons, or prepare a special dish for him because he liked it. Mr. Instep was genial and accomodating to his neighbors but he never had time to pump a pail of water for his wife, nor did he ever say, "Let me do this, I know you are tired." He never thought of purchasing an article that would enable his wife to put on a touch of style, until she begged for it.

They entertained adverse views on political questions and



their church affiliations were different, but they were united on one question, namely ample punishment for their children.

When it became known that Fred, anticipating the action of the grand jury, had left the country unceremoniously, those who were concerned about the cause of his departure had but little hopes of apprehending him. They knew his cunning. But Fred's whereabouts remained a secret only a few weeks. A citizen of Jamburg who happened to be in Atlanta, Georgia, descried him in that city and made the fact known at Jamburg. His arrest was ordered by telegraph and a deputy sheriff was sent to bring him back to answer the demands of justice. Fred explained his trip to the south instead of the west and told the sheriff he cheerfully accepted an invitation to take a free ride back to his old home, stating that he would have no difficulty in proving his innocence.

The citizens of Jamburg expected an unusually interesting trial, for they knew Fred would employ some shrewd devices for his defense; but he did not wait even till he arrived at the seat of his crime to exercise his talents. As the train was approaching Richmond, Virginia, where it was to stop twenty minutes for supper, Fred said to the sheriff in a very pleasant, assuring manner, "Let me see your warrant; you know I'm a lawyer and of course want to know that everything is done in a straight, legal way."

The officer unhesitatingly complied with the request. Fred read it over carefully and went into a lively discussion of the technicalities of legal documents. The sheriff became so much interested that he allowed his prisoner to slyly slip the warrant into his pocket. When the train stopped Fred said, "Well, let's go out and get our suppers; I'm hungry." As they proceeded toward the eating room of the depot amid the jabber of hack drivers and hotel drummers, the hurry and bustle of passengers and the shuffling of bag-

gage, Fred said to a policeman — he expected to find one at the station, of course —

"Here, officer, I'm the sheriff of Fairfax county, returning with a prisoner that I arrested down at Burkville. Will you please hold him till I go to the telegraph office and send a dispatch home? Here's a dollar for your trouble. Don't let him get away."

The policeman took the money and before the deputy sheriff had time to recover from the shock of Fred's remarkable conduct, the latter disappeared in the crowd. As the sheriff started to follow his prisoner the policeman grabbed him.

"Yes, but I'm — the other man's the prisoner. Let me go." The sheriff struggled as he spoke, but the policeman held him tight. "You can't play that trick on me," said the latter, "You'd just as well behave yourself and keep quiet till the sheriff comes back."

The sheriff made an effort to release himself, but another policeman noticing the struggle, came to his fellow officer's assistance, and they soon had the sheriff under subjection.

After some earnest argument the policeman took their prisoner to the telegraph office where he identified himself through an interchange of telegrams with his friends in Jamburg. But they did not find Fred at the telegraph office. He had gone down an alley in the darkness of the night, slipped around to the rear end of the same train that he came in on, boarded it as it pulled out — without the sheriff — and went on to Fredericksburg where he changed cars, taking a train bound for the west.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### SOME INTERESTING CASES.

In order to encourage and justify my neighbors in assisting me to keep out competition, I missed no opportunity to make myself a formidable antagonist in the arena of life.

The name of being one of the best physicians in the state was a powerful weapon in the slaying of competitors. I give below some of the feats I performed in acquiring this name among my neighbors: I was called to see a man who had a variety of acute symptoms, the principal of which was severe pain in the left side of the chest. At the end of two days, not having afforded the patient any relief, and becoming somewhat alarmed, I pronounced it a case of pneumonia, complicated with inflammation of the liver, acute Bright's disease and threatened with malarial fever. The patient got well.

Curing a case of this kind is sure to elicit no small amount of praise, and that is the reason I introduced so many complications. But the fact is, this was only a case of intercostal neuralgia. To the question of a neighbor woman who was not so ignorant as some physicians would have people to be who come in contact with their patients, "Why don't he cough if he has pneumonia?" I replied, after some meditation, "Why, I prevented that with a new remedy that I have discovered which dissipates the disease by promoting absorption of the intralobular secretions."

This was perfectly satisfactory, and served as additional proof of my superior wisdom and skill.

A popular young lady had an attack of indigestion accompanied with diarrhea; after examining the sputa, or pretending to, rather, and making some other unusual in-



vestigations, I looked wise and alarmed, and told the friends it was a case of malignant typhoid fever, complicated with enteritis and ulceration of the peritoneum, hastening to a fatal issue unless prompt measures were employed to prevent it. I made four visits the first day and wrote several prescriptions for this patient.

When it was evident in the course of twenty-four hours that she was getting well, I said her life was saved by some new remedies of my own discovery. My statement was believed, notwithstanding the fact that typhoid fever always runs its course of three weeks or more.

I was addicted to the habit, in which I became an expert, of killing two birds with one stone whenever there were two birds in range; one day I sent word to my patients in the country that I couldn't visit them that day on account of having been called to Des Moines to operate on a young man for the removal of a tumor on the brain for the cure of epilepsy; but the fact is I only spent the day wandering the streets of the city and loafing around the hotel. In due time I had the local paper state that my operation was a perfect success.

I once went to Chicago and attended a meeting of the National Medical Association, which was all right had I not caused the false statement to be published that I went as a delegate from the Iowa State Medical Society.

These schemes with many others served the double purpose of enhancing my own reputation and giving me power to destroy that of my competitors. I was feeling pretty independent, and why shouldn't I? If there is a man on earth engaged in the activities of life for the purpose of earning a livelihood who may be justified in feeling independent, it is the established physician. The minister is liable to be compelled by the sentiments of his congregation, to resign a lucrative pastorate without any assurance of another engagement; the teacher, though unusually well qualified for his profession, depends on the fickle sentiment,

if not whims, of his irresponsible patrons and perhaps a very ignorant, incompetent school board; fire, flood or poor management may suddenly render the prosperous merchant bankrupt and the banker is liable to be driven to the wall by a financial panic or unwise investments; but the physician who has acquired a good reputation and practice can hold it so long as he retains his faculties, because it is secured through his reputation; and since this is built mostly on prejudice, he may feel secure, for there is no element in the human mind so difficult to suppress as prejudice.

And besides the satisfaction of possible independence, the practitioner of medicine enjoys the opportunity of learning more of human nature in all its phases than any other person. Of all creation, man is the greatest mystery, therefore the most interesting study. There is no limit to the remarkable incidents of the busy physician's life, some of which are serious, while others are exceedingly humorous; and in many cases these two features are combined in a ludicrous manner.

The medical profession is often called on to help people out of social troubles as well as physical: "Doctor, I want to ask a favor of you, and if you'll grant it I will feel under everlasting obligations to you."

"Well what is it you want?"

The suppliant was John Bates and there were marks of worry and loss of sleep on his face.

"I'm intending to get married this evening at seven o'clock," he said, "but Mrs. King declares that she will be on hand to prevent it. You see, I've been paying some attention to her, and she's very jealous and says I shall not marry Miss Park. You were called in to see her last evening, weren't you, when she had one of her hysterical spells? I was there after you were; I called to tell her that the wedding had been postponed, but she wouldn't believe me. Now, what I want you to do, and I'll pay you well for it, is to go to her house and detain her till after the wedding. You



can do this consistently, since you have her under your professional care anyhow. Your confirming my statement will very likely convince her. Something must be done, for I know she's bent on making trouble."

According to agreement I called at Mrs. King's at six in the evening under the pretext of professional duty, and succeeded in keeping her at home — though very much against her will — till seven-thirty, and then, believing I had fulfilled my part of the contract, went home; but not to remain long; half an hour later a messenger, almost out of breath, rushed to my front door and exclaimed,

"Doctor, you're wanted at Mrs. Park's just as soon as you can get there! There's a woman dying!"

I grabbed my medicine case and started, wondering what could be the trouble; had the ceremony thrown the bride into convulsions or heart failure? On arriving at the house I was ushered into a room where I found Mrs. King lying in a comatose state. I was told that just as the guests were sitting down to the wedding supper the door bell rang, and when the door was opened Mrs. King said, "I want to see Mr. Bates."

The bridegroom, recognizing her voice, hurried to the front, but was too late; the intruder met him in the middle of the parlor, and, giving her arm full sweep, struck him in the face with her open hand, the smack being loud enough to be heard a block away; and then she dropped like a log, full length on the floor, remaining apparently in an unconscious state till my arrival. My efforts to arouse her proved futile till I poured some dilute spirits of ammonia down her throat. This instantly strangled her into consciousness, but instead of thanking me for saving her life, which the bystanders gave me credit for doing, she lashed me with epithets and criticisms.

"No, Docetor," she said between gasps, "you're a fraud. You lied about the wedding. I always took you to be my friend."





STRUCK HIM IN THE FACE WITH HER OPEN HAND \* \* \*  
AND THEN DROPPED LIKE A LOG, FULL LENGTH ON  
THE FLOOR.



"Why, Mrs. King, I am. Haven't I always done what I could for you?" She rolled her eyes around at me in disgust and said,

"That dose of medicine you just now gave me looks like it; don't it? No, I believe you and John Bates are scheming to kill me to get me out of the way."

I laughed at her, and some of the others joined me. This threw her into false convulsions. I continued to tease her, and when the guests discovered that she was not in a dangerous condition they rather enjoyed the fun I was making of her case.

"Mrs. King," said I, "if we kill you, we'll see that you have a first class funeral."

"How can you be so cruel and mean? You know I'm on my death bed. But there's nothing so cruel as a wicked doctor."

She rolled her eyeballs up, showing only the whites and seemed not to breathe for two minutes.

"O, Mrs. King," said a lady standing at the bedside, "you're not going to die."

"Yes, I am," she indistinctly said, struggling for breath. "Be still, I hear the angels' wings fluttering, and feel the breeze."

"Have you any request to make, Mrs. King, or orders to give concerning your affairs?" I said with all the solemnity I could command.

"Yes,"—then a long difficult breath—"I—don't—want—any—doctor—to sing—at—my—funeral."

We all laughed.

"I'm about gone," she gasped. "Now, the angels are carrying me up."

I took her hand and said, "Good by, Mrs. King."

She opened her eyes and exclaimed, "There! I heard St. Peter slam the door against a doctor."



This caused such a general outburst of laughter that the poor woman was thrown into a fit of anger which produced the effect this condition often does in this type of hysteria, to restore the mental faculties to the normal state; and in a half hour she walked home.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### A VISIT TO THE BRUCE HOME.

A little social gathering in the north part of Des Moines in September, 1881, illustrated the inevitable mutations of life. Mr. and Mrs. Albert Bruce had invited my wife and me to make them a visit, remaining over Sunday. The object in having us at this particular time was that they had with them some old Pennsylvania friends, Judge Kern, a former millionaire banker, and his wife. The necessity of using the word, former, demonstrates the instability of human affairs. A few years previously Judge Kern was a leading lawyer and banker, worth over a million dollars, his wife a social leader, their house and its furnishings among the very finest, and their children getting a first class education. No other family in that part of the country excelled them in the brilliancy and elaborateness of their receptions. I was the uneducated son of a poor, illiterate tenant farmer, and my being invited as a guest in honor of the Judge and his wife was not then among the future probabilities. But things had changed. Judge Kern, through fickle fortune had lost his millions and I, perhaps by the mercy of Providence, had risen in the world.

Mr. and Mrs. Bruce had two children, one four years old and the other two; and we had one, a boy one year old.

While I received the invitation with extreme gratification, I feared my enjoyment of the visit would be hampered by embarrassment and restraint; but I soon became satisfied that neither Gertrude's husband or my wife knew about my unsuccessful courtship with our hostess. I had met Mr. Bruce a few times since he located in Des Moines, but had not seen Gertrude since she left her home in Jamburg.

Before our visit ended I was convinced it was fortunate for all parties concerned that my desires were not gratified, for Albert Bruce was much more capable of making Gertrude happy than I was; and Julia Pansy was decidedly more suitable as a wife for a man of my disposition and aspirations than Gertrude was.

No pains were spared to make us comfortable and happy during our visit at the Bruce home, and the entertaining was done so easily and gracefully that we almost felt that we were conferring a choice favor and honor on the household.

Mr. and Mrs. Bruce's superior qualifications were augmented by their elegant residence, with the art and grace of its appointments. Among the leading attractions was the library, which contained eight hundred volumes, many of which were heirlooms and souvenirs, but most of them were useful works, showing excellent taste and judgment in their selection. There was not a book in the collection but what would be taken down with expectation and returned without disappointment. There was nothing that Mr. and Mrs. Bruce were so proud of as their library, except their children. We all visited the library together. On Judge Kern's remarking that it was a very commendable assortment of reading matter, especially for persons raising a family, Mrs. Bruce said:

"Yes, I think it is important to have the proper kind of books accessible to children during the susceptible and formative periods of their lives."

"It took the race many thousand years," said the Judge, "to accomplish what it has and arrive at the present stage of civilization and enlightenment, and all the deeds and thoughts of man are stored in mysterious preservation in the pages of books; and as each succeeding generation depends on what has gone before as a guide for its advancement and happiness, how important that the better class of reading matter be furnished to our youth."



"Books," said Mrs. Bruce, "are the blessed, and only means we have of enjoying intercourse with the great minds of past ages."

The Judge took from the shelf a volume on anthropology and, opening it, remarked, "This is a very interesting subject."

"Yes," said Mrs. Bruce, "Mr. Bruce likes to read that when he has nothing of special importance on his mind."

"To do the subject justice," said the Judge, "it must be studied when the mind is free from care."

Mr. Bruce, who was on the other side of the room glancing over some books with Mrs. Kern, overhearing the conversation, remarked, "I know nothing more worthy of a man's best thoughts than himself."

"Nor do you know of anything," said the Judge, "that he knows so little about, comparatively."

"Man is a mystery, surely;" Mr. Bruce stepped across to where the others were standing, followed by Mrs. Kern. "But," he continued, "we would think he would understand himself better after so much investigation of the subject. But the average person doesn't seem to care to know much about the vital facts concerning humanity."

"The trouble is," said the Judge, "each individual is kept too busy looking after his own direct personal concerns to pay much attention to remote interests and generalities."

"I have often thought," said Mrs. Bruce, "that some one ought to write a book on the peculiarities of human nature — but then if we are going to discuss such a weighty subject let's go where we can all have seats."

The company followed Mrs. Bruce into the parlor. "It would take a large volume," I remarked, "to exhaust the subject."

"Indeed it would," said Mrs. Bruce, "the doctors ought to know something about it."

"One of the peculiarities of man," said Mr. Bruce, "is his slow development; but then all creation is a slow process.

The formation of the ingredients of the earth required millions of years, and as man is the most intricate and important of all God's creatures, it is no wonder that his development should be slow."

"What are we to understand," I asked, "by the development of man? When may it be said he became developed?"

"He has not arrived at that stage yet," was the reply, "he is yet far from what he is destined to be. Man was made in the image and likeness of his creator; but through outside influences he fell into a state of depravity, and for several thousand years he has been gradually recovering from that condition, and I believe his advancement will continue until perfection is practically attained.

"When that state of the race obtains," said Mrs. Kern, "the world will be a paradise."

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Bruce, "life will then be worth living."

The Judge smiled. The expression on his face indicated a mild kind of doubt. He spoke in tones, however, that showed no desire to gainsay Mr. Bruce's assertion.

"Taking your position, Mr. Bruce, is, perhaps, only a question of optimism. It would be ungenerous to say the world is not constantly growing better, yet history is constantly being made that would justify a charitable view of pessimism. Reform has always traveled on a slow coach, and it seems, occasionally, to get stuck in the mire of iniquity; yet I suppose we must admit that the tendency is generally onward and upward. It takes so long to convince the human race that it is wrong in its position on any question, and that a different life and line of conduct would be more conducive to comfort and happiness."

"There is not so much difficulty," said Mr. Bruce, "in convincing man of a moral fact as it would seem, but the trouble is he is too often convinced against his will, in which case he is liable not to admit his convictions."

"If a man is convinced," Judge Kern asked, "that a



changed condition of things would be better for the world, and therefore better for him, why will he not admit it?"

"The fault is in his intelligence. His mind is not large enough nor strong enough to see and understand; and there is where the remedy must be applied — to the true and unprejudiced cultivation of the intellect."

"What do you mean," said the Judge, "by true and unprejudiced cultivation?"

"I mean the imparting to the mind knowledge of itself and everything pertaining, directly and indirectly thereto, in order that man may have a better understanding of himself. If we knew ourselves thoroughly we would practically always do right and never do wrong. It is extremely seldom that a person obtains any real comfort or enjoyment by doing wrong, while on the other hand there is a penalty attached to every wrong deed; suffering or inconvenience in some form or other, is sure to follow. We may feel it and not know whence it comes. By the exercise of good sense these penalties may be avoided, and with a proper understanding of ourselves and the laws that govern our being, we would have this good sense and know how to successfully resist the temptation to do wrong — we would be afraid of the consequences besides having a practical love for the right. The thief, the murderer, the highwayman, the liar, the prostitute, the libertine, all criminals, will admit that an upright life would be more pleasant and desirable than theirs, and that such a life would be better for them. Then we may be sure that a proper understanding of themselves would have made for them a different career. The present system of educating the conscience is defective. Our teachers make the reward for righteousness too remote. The preacher teaches too much theology and not enough of right living. He should not reserve so nearly all of heaven for the future life. The more real pleasure the soul gets out of its earthly existence the better it is prepared for the life



to come. A shrunken, dissatisfied, embittered life, though full of religious devotion, illy fits a person for heaven."

Mrs. Kern was becoming restless. While she had confidence in Mr. Bruce's judgment, so anxious was she for an explanation that she interrupted:

"Don't you think, Mr. Bruce, that there is already too much time and thought devoted to worldly pleasures?"

"I have reference, Mrs. Kern, to true pleasures, pleasures that are secured without injury to any one's person, property, morals or character. An act or indulgence, though accompanied with gratification and delight even to the point ecstasy, affords no real pleasure if conscience says, though with subdued voice, it is not right. And in all cases the remorse finally counteracts the pleasure and convinces the participant that it did not pay.

The human race is a dismal failure so far, nor can it be considered anything else until man has made many strides toward the image and likeness of his Creator."

"O, I think," said the Judge, "comparing the present with the past, we are improving."

"So do I," quickly replied Mr. Bruce, "but under a different system of education the improvement would be much more rapid."

"Have you a system to suggest," Judge Kern asked, "as an improvement over the present one?"

"I am not a professional educator, but I may have ideas as to what should be taught."

Mr. Bruce changed chairs, taking one that gave him a more conspicuous position before his hearers. His wife watched every movement; her eyes surveyed the company and then rested on the speaker; anticipating the sentiment, she was prepared to endorse every word that should be said. Mr. Bruce went on:

"I feel like emphasizing the statement that man does not understand himself as he should. While we boast of the wonderful discoveries and achievements of the nineteenth

century, and claim that the climax of ingenuity having been so nearly reached, it would be impossible for any future century to compare with this one, I believe that the human race has as yet a limited appreciation of its possibilities. The advancement in the near future will be more wonderful, but in new lines, than that of the past because it will be accomplished only through greater and stronger intellectuality. The great obstacle in the way of human advancement is disease; diseased bodies, diseased mentality, diseased conscience. Happiness depends on conscience and conscience cannot be a reliable guide unless supported by a healthy mind; and owing to the mutual sympathy between body and mind the former must be in a healthy state in order that the conscience may always be a safe dictator of conduct.

Now the reason I put so much stress on conscience is because it is not probable that man will put himself into the condition that will make the advancement I predict possible until he has a higher idea of duty and a truer understanding of his own interests."

The speaker paused and the silence continued some time. Mr. Bruce's hearers, evidently felt that, as a matter of courtesy they ought to say something.

"Don't you think," said Mrs. Kern, "there is a good deal being done to educate the conscience?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Bruce, "and some progress is being made. This teaching is creating better sentiment, at least than formerly existed. The highly civilized people are getting a pretty correct idea of right and wrong. They have a good moral code, but the trouble is, they don't properly appreciate the present advantage to themselves of living up to their code. Their mental sight is not strong enough to see through it."

Feeling a desire to manifest some interest in this subject, which I really cared but little about, I asked, "Have you a remedy, Mr. Bruce, for the evils you complain of?"



man is as susceptible to improvement as the lower animals. Our grandfathers remember when the largest size draught horses were two hundred pounds lighter than they are to-day; and at that time 'two-forty' was the fastest trotting speed, but now we have horses with a record of a mile in two minutes and eleven seconds. But the most important improvement in the human species would be along intellectual lines. This, however, would necessarily be accompanied with physical development also. Yes, Doctor, if you and I could look down from our mansions in the skies a few generations hence we would see a race quite different from what it was when we left the earth. People will be more uniform in size, average larger than they do now, be much stronger physically and mentally, more capable of penetrating the mysteries of life and understanding the laws of nature. Men and women will be handsomer and more symmetrical in form, because it will be known what types of physiognomy blended, will produce beauty in offspring. Homeliness will be as objectionable in the masculine portion of the race as it is now in the feminine; unsymmetrical form in either sex will be intolerable and chronic diseases or weak constitution will subject the victim to social ostracism as much as insanity or imbecility does in the present age. The great blessing to come out of this change will be the improved moral and social condition of man. What the world needs most is social purification. Society makes it hard for people to do right at all times."

"Why," said I, "Mr. Bruce, I supposed the opposite was the case. Don't you think people often do the right thing for the sake of being respectable?"

"Yes, but they oftener do wrong for the same purpose."

All eyes were opened a little wider and set squarely on the speaker. Mr. Bruce continued:

"You will expect this assertion to be explained, and as a basis of an explanation I will make another: The desire for wealth is the cause of most of the world's sins; and why



does a man want wealth? In order that he may be respectable and have influence with his fellows. Now, this last assertion needs no explanation; all will admit that nothing else is so instrumental in securing influence as wealth, and the most prominent desire in the average heart is to be influential; and what transgression is not actuated directly by this desire. Murder, war, theft, falsehood, drunkenness, deception, fraud, licentiousness may be traced to this trait in human nature."

"Every thinking, reasonable person will agree with you, Mr. Bruce," said the Judge, "that wealth has too much social sway, but how do you expect the change you predict to remedy the matter?"

"By inculcating on society higher ideals, making morality and intellect, instead of wealth, sovereign," was the answer.

"The millennium," Mr. Bruce went on, "is sure to come, and I believe its dawn is not far off. But it can come only through a more thorough understanding of life, which will be impossible until the human body and mind are freed from disease; and this last cannot be effected as long as society and the law allow children to be born of unhealthy parents, and when we —"

A childish scream was heard in the door yard and all eyes were turned in that direction. The two little Bruce children and their dog Pluto were playing on the lawn; the dog reared, and placing his front feet on Ruth's shoulders, threw her on her back and began to lavish kisses on her face and neck. She rolled over and buried her face in the grass, but Pluto, with his legs across the child's back, persisted in trying to find her face with his nose. Orvil at first laughed heartily, but when his sister uttered signs of distress he hurried to the rescue. Taking the dog by both ears he pulled with all his might, which made the brute yell with pain; he hung on till they rolled over each other twice. This amused Ruth; she stood, slapping her knees and roaring

with laughter. Orvil came out of the scuffle with two bloody scratches on his face from Pluto's claws; but he came into the house at his mother's call, laughing.

"Pluto treated you rather roughly, didn't he, Orvil," said Judge Kern.

"Yes," replied the boy, "but I got him off my little sister. That's what I was after."

Mrs. Bruce, taking Orvil by the hand, said, "Let's go in and wash your face and put court plaster on those scratches."

"No," said Orvil, "I want Dr. Fussanfeathers to do it, that's his business."

We all laughed heartily at this expression, and Orvil seemed embarrassed, as if he had made a ludicrous blunder.

"All right, Orvil," said I, "with your mother's consent, I will dress your wounds in a scientific manner."

In a very few minutes I had the ugly marks on the plucky little fellow's face hidden with court plaster, and he was again on the lawn playing with Pluto; the two seeming as good friends as ever. Ruth ventured out, too, but she took a club with her, and whenever the dog came near she would raise the weapon and he would spring off at a safe distance, squat, raise his ears and look saucy, as much as to say, "I was only joking."

This incident interested the company in the children so much that we all moved out on to the veranda to watch them play.

We had been joined by Miss Loretta Elbridge who lived in the house on the opposite street corner. She was sitting on the porch when the trouble between the dog and the children occurred, and, thinking it more serious than it was, dropped the book she was reading and hurried over to protect the latter.

"Orvil exhibited remarkable pluck," said Judge Kern, "for a boy only four years old."

"Yes, and what wonderful strength he has," said Miss



Elbridge," to handle that big dog as he did. I'm sorry to see that beautiful face disfigured."

"O, well, it will heal up," remarked the boy's father.

"Do you think, Doctor," Miss Elbridge asked, turning to me, "it will leave a scar?"

I assured her that it would not.

Miss Elbridge's mention of the beautiful face brought me to realize the unusual beauty and attractiveness of little Orvil Bruce as I never had before. His complexion was fair, but there was a glow on his smooth skin that indicated health and vitality; the full round head, perfectly proportioned body and symmetrical features gave evidence of a well balanced temperament. His large bright eyes and the cheer and animation in his countenance would command the admiration of the dullest observer. He seemed to have as good use of his body as the average boy of eight years; nor was the mind slower than the body. And all that has been said of Orvil may be said of Ruth; only there was more color in her face. Her cheeks were as the clouds kissed by the evening sun. This little two year old girl's pronunciation and use of language were wonderful. She often attracted attention by little, innocent tricks played on older persons. Two more admirable children than Orvil and Ruth Bruce were not to be found anywhere.

Miss Elbridge took her leave just as we were getting interested in her. She was a woman of rare charms. Her face and form were strictly of the Grecian type; complexion a little dark, but clear, hair black and eyes gray. No sculptor ever chiseled more perfect features. She was easy and graceful, but there was dignity in her manner that said, "Any attempt at familiarity will be resented." There was melody in her voice and her command of language was such that no one could help being charmed by her conversation and it would be worth the price of an opera ticket to hear the music of her laughter. She had that conquering look in



her eyes that is so rare. While listening to her converse with Judge Kern I was buried in imagination. My mind was reviewing what Albert Bruce had said about heredity and I said to myself, "I know nothing of your ancestry, but I'm sure that you were not made of common clay." Some inquiries revealed the fact that she was very popular in social and literary circles as well as in church and Sabbath school. She was public spirited and spent a good deal of time and money for charity; twenty-four years of age, a college graduate and lived with her parents on a competency that they had saved in business, she having several thousand dollars invested in productive real estate in her own name.

"But," said Mrs. Bruce, my informant, "the most remarkable trait in Miss Elbridge is that she can be so precise and dignified in her conduct, exact in language, neat in person and yet so easy and entertaining that every one feels comfortable in her presence and seems to delight in her company. Notwithstanding these qualities she enjoys humor and has a high appreciation of the ridiculous as well as the serious. She does some cooking and housework, but I don't believe one ever could find her, even in the kitchen, with a hair out of place or a spot on her clothes. She is prudent, yet not prudish; punctilious but not fastidious. For instance, she doesn't possess that modesty which makes some women object to employing a physician because he is a single man. Dr. Vertebra, a bachelor is their family physician."

"It is easy, Mrs. Bruce, for me," I remarked, "to agree with you after seeing even what little I have of Miss Elbridge."

"I cannot see," continued Mrs. Bruce, "why Providence doesn't send along a good man to take Loretta Elbridge for a wife. It is too bad for so much loveliness to go to waste. But I presume she would live single a good many years before her acquaintances would designate her as an old maid.

Why, such a thing would seem like profanity, or sacrilege. Miss Loretta Elbridge an old maid! A lady who is always so careful herself never to say or do anything that would be unpleasant to any one entitled to respect. It would be boorish.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### A SURPRISE.

On the morning of July fourth, 1882, in company with my wife and boy, I drove to Jagtown, a distance of fourteen miles. A celebration of unusual interest had been advertised for that place. Exciting games and sports of various kinds were announced; horse races by steeds of good record were a leading feature of the program.

When we arrived great crowds were already on the streets, many having been there since seven o'clock, waiting for the parade which was to take place at ten. Mothers with babies in arms were marching up and down the streets to pass away the time. Others were perched on goods boxes; young men and women, holding each other's hands as they walked through the crowds, was a common sight.

We sauntered about the village quite a while before going out to the grounds. The main address had commenced and the audience was unusually attentive. This, we soon discovered was because of the skillful mixture of eloquence and humor, which happily commanded the attention of all classes.

The speaker already had his hearers thoroughly under control. When we entered the crowd he was dwelling on the wonderful achievements of the United States since the Revolutionary war. "But," said he, "we are not what we should be. The United States ought to acquire more territory and take a much greater part than she does in international commerce. There is no reason why we should not do half the carrying trade of the world and within twenty-five years possess half its wealth."



He went on telling what schemes this country might employ to secure foreign territory and wrench commerce from other nations. It was an unusual Fourth of July oration.

At times the speaker would assume the style of an attorney at the bar, using his voice and gestures in a way that made him seem very serious, and determined that the audience should believe what he was saying because something of stupendous importance was at stake; then, seeming to realize the ludicrousness of his manner, he would suddenly straighten up, put on a broad smile and say a lot of exceedingly funny things that would convulse the audience with laughter. Then, probably before their risibilities could subside they would be spellbound with his patriotic eloquence.

But I admit that I paid more attention to the orator than to the oration. There was something about him that attracted me in a peculiar way. I kept my eye on his plump, round face, keen, sharp eyes and numerous wrinkles around them when he smiled.

At the close of the exercises I had an irresistible impulse to put myself in the presence of the orator of the day. He was engaged in conversation with some ladies and gentlemen who had gathered to congratulate him on his interesting address. As soon as I approached he ceased talking and, smiling familiarly, extending his hand and said, "Hello, Doc! I noticed you in the audience. How are you, old chum? Old partner!"

Of all the handshakes I ever experienced, this one came the nearest dislocating and fracturing bones. It was only the circumstances that prevented me from yelling with pain.

"What does this mean, Fred? I exclaimed. "I have been half dazed ever since coming into this audience and seeing you on the rostrum. I tried to recall where I had seen that familiar face before, but not until this minute had I positively identified you. Where do you live?"

"I live in Des Moines. And now I'll ask you the same question. What place is honored by your residence?"

"I'm living in Petville yet. I suppose you are practicing law? At least I heard a few years ago that you had been admitted to the bar."

"Yes, and handling real estate."

"Of course you are making money?" I asked.

"Well, I'm keeping the wolf some distance from the door. I get fifty dollars for this little talk to-day."

Fred and I continued our conversation till we were left alone, when my wife came up; I introduced her to my old friend.

"I'm so glad to meet you, Mr. Instep," she said, "I've heard the doctor say so much about you."

Several incidents and experiences of by-gone days were recalled with a good deal of interest.

"Where are you going to take dinner?" Fred asked.

"We have made no arrangements yet," I replied.

"Say!" said Fred, "I have accepted an invitation to dine at Col. Parker's, and I think we can manage it so you can go there, too. The Colonel and his wife are right over there; now, we'll saunter around that way and accidentally run on to them; I'll introduce you and very likely they will invite you to dinner. If they don't I'll innocently ask you where you are going to get your dinners, and of course that will remind them of their obligations and duties as public spirited, social beings."

The plan was executed and we had a good, jolly visit and an excellent dinner.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### JEHU VERBOSEGO.

The question as to how I was to realize the high honors I had coveted so long, concerned me not a little. My own county, to which my reputation was confined, could not bestow them. How long before I could occupy the castles I had built so high in the air? There always seemed to be a decided obstacle in the way of my contentment and happiness.

About this time I lost the services of Jehu Verbosego, my aide-de-camp. He had not died, left the country or withdrawn his friendship, but instead of our private consultations being devoted to the maintenance of our respective monopolies, they were now always concerning the state of his health.

"At what age," said this gentleman, in his proverbial manner one day in my office, "should a man's physical strength and endurance begin to depreciate?"

"It depends," I answered, "on the constitution and habits of life."

"When is the attitude of the mental faculties in regard to memory supposed to start on the downward grade?"

"O, that depends a good deal on the training and amount of trouble you've had."

Our conversation continued over an hour, most of which would be of little interest to the reader, but among the questions he asked were, "How many times per minute should the pulse of a man of my age and temperament beat? Of course, you know I am of the purely mental temperament. Which of all the temperaments is promotive of



the greatest longevity, in your estimation? Doesn't the quantity of success a man has procured in life have a vast amount to do with it? Isn't there often a controversy transpiring between a man's mentality and his physical organization? Doesn't excessive brain power exert itself to the detriment of the physical constitution? My experience teaches to that effect, anyhow."

I answered his questions in the way that I thought would please him best, for he had the idea that his judgment was almost infallible, or, at least, he expected others to consider it so.

"I believe," he continued, "the all-wise Creator, as He is called, often makes gregarious mistakes in the creation of men."

I had to turn away to avoid smiling in his face. "What makes you think so?" I asked.

"Why, because, for instance, he has put great heads and brains on small bodies; and you know, Doctor, that a small man can't command the respect and wield the influence that a large one can."

Mr. Verbosego revealed the fact that some of his recent financial investments had disappointed him. He was a director in a concern where some of his money was invested, and attributed its failure to the board's refusal to take his advice. He blustered round so that the other directors called him a little whiffet, and ignored him. In the settlement of his father-in-law's estate he imagined himself greatly wronged. He also had some serious domestic troubles.

The above facts were brought out during two consultations in my efforts to account for the insomnia he complained of. He very much disliked the idea of being an invalid, but I succeeded into alarming him into a decision to take a course of treatment. I prescribed a narcotic composed of chloral hydrate and whiskey before going to bed. Two days afterward he reported that the medicine had pro-

duced sound sleep, and that he was well pleased; but in two weeks he complained of new symptoms and that the medicine did not have the desired effect. I then put him on bromide of potassium; two months after this I resorted to opium, then morphine; but none of my remedies seemed to do him any permanent good; in fact, he occasionally showed new symptoms of impaired health. As often as he showed signs of dissatisfaction, I would explain the symptoms, apparently to his satisfaction, and change medicines. I kept this up several months. It was a case of unusual interest to me, for I was anxious to keep Mr. Verbosego out of both the grave and lunatic asylum, my fears constantly changing from one to the other. He was good pay, and there was a good deal of sickness in his family. My diagnosis of this case was as fickle as the winds. At different times I was on the point of urging him to let me take him to Chicago to be examined by the eminent surgeons of that city with a view to an operation for organic lesion of the brain; then a change of symptoms would satisfy me that the disease was wholly of a mental character. I could never see any reason, during the eighteen months I had him under constant treatment, for locating it in any other place than the brain. I sent for a work on mental diseases, but what I read of it only intensified my perplexity as to the diagnosis.

Finding that my patient was growing worse under the use of narcotics and sedatives, I employed general tonics; yet he occasionally complained of new symptoms. For a long time he was harrassed with fears of sudden death from heart disease—in fact I thought the action of his heart justified such fears. The agonies of this man during a period of three years can be imagined only by those who have experienced similar pathological conditions, and the physician who has had a case of this kind under treatment.

Mr. Verbosego could not understand why a man of such "extraordinary mentality," and who was of so much conse-



quence in the world, should be handicapped in the prosecution of his very important mission. This worried him a great deal. He admitted in his heart, however, that owing to his lack of education and inferior physique, his work of reform and advancement was to be done second handed. He was to raise up children who would be distinguished men and women. He often spoke of the "fine mentality" of his sons and daughters. The phrase became a by-word in the mouths of his neighbors. Speaking of his boy, he once said, "I must put him in a gymnasium, so that his body may be sufficiently developed to sustain that mammoth brain of his."

Mr. Verbosego's brain became very sensitive. He often had spells of hypochondriasis that deprived him of a whole night's sleep. This, sometimes, would be followed by strong forebodings of insanity. He said he felt a good deal of the time as though his mind was liable to slip from him in a moment; and to avert the threatened disaster, he would resort to company and engage in conversation with all the energy he could muster. Of course, in forced conversation a man is apt to be uninteresting and tiresome, thus becoming a bore to his companions. He seemed to have no regards for the conversational rights of others, often breaking into the middle of a sentence with remarks that had no bearing on what the other was saying. A man who had been interrupted, and whom Mr. Verbosego always supposed to be one of his best friends, made this quotation in a jeering manner: "O, wad some pow'r the giftie gie us to see oursels as ithers see us."

Mr. Verbosego paused, looked astonished as well as disgusted, his eyes giving out a flash of vengeance, and said, in his pompous manner, "Well, I don't see the application."

"The idea is," said the other, that you have the disagreeable habit of chipping in when others are talking. You so love to hear yourself talk that you forget other people's rights."

Under the circumstances this was a cruel reproach, and



the man evidently would not have offered it had he known the condition of Mr. Verbosego's mind. The effect was to produce an intense condition of the brain, which was already in a hyperaemic state.

He felt as if he could never get over this show of disrespect. His brain was feverish and throbbing. He said to himself, "This is the worst attack of head trouble I have ever had, and I'll not survive. I can't remain in this condition very long without a stroke of apoplexy, for large brains are liable to this accident."

He went home, but wife and children were no comfort to him. Hoping that active exercise would divert the blood from the head, he walked rapidly round the suburbs of the town; but this only gave him a better opportunity to brood over his affliction. Suicide was considered. He said he would rather be dead than insane. What was the most painless method of taking one's life? He sat down on a rock and continued the soliloquy: "No suffering could be worse than I have endured, and I don't see any prospect of relief; but if I end my troubles by self destruction, what will my friends—yes, and my enemies—think of me? O, well, they'll be gone, too, before long, so what's the difference? And then I read a statement in a newspaper once that many of the world's greatest men committed suicide."

He raised his head, opened his eyes wide, a brighter expression came to his face, and then he continued: "I'm getting some comfort from these thoughts. Then I'll leave a note, stating that I was driven to the awful act by the ill-treatment of jealous enemies."

A few more bright rays came to his countenance. But the thought was unfortunate, for the recollection of certain unpleasant experiences intensified his despondency; his mind experienced a violent shock; the sensation was like an explosion in the head that was forcing the mind out. He started! placed both hands on his head and exclaimed, "O, heavens, I'm gone!"

He sat quiet a few moments, looking into space. His eyes could not have been distinguished from artificial ones. He went on: "This is the worst spell I have ever had; and yet, the next one may be still harder. After this experience—these thoughts—there's nothing in life for me. I cannot endure this condition of mind any longer. Anything else would be better. The world don't know how to treat a man. I must get away from this trouble; it will not get away from me."

As he uttered these last thoughts to himself his footsteps were carrying him in the direction of the drug store.

"Morphine's the thing; it's the least painful."

This sentence was spoken in audible tones. Just before reaching the place where the poison was to be procured, a stranger met him and said, "Is this Jehu Verbosego?"

"Yes, sir," was the indifferent reply.

"My name is Wilson; I live fifteen miles southwest of here. I understand you have money to loan."

"What security can you give? How much do you want? When will you want it?"

There was an electric change in Mr. Verbosego's countenance. His voice showed animation.

I want eight hundred dollars as soon as I can get it, and will give good farm land security."

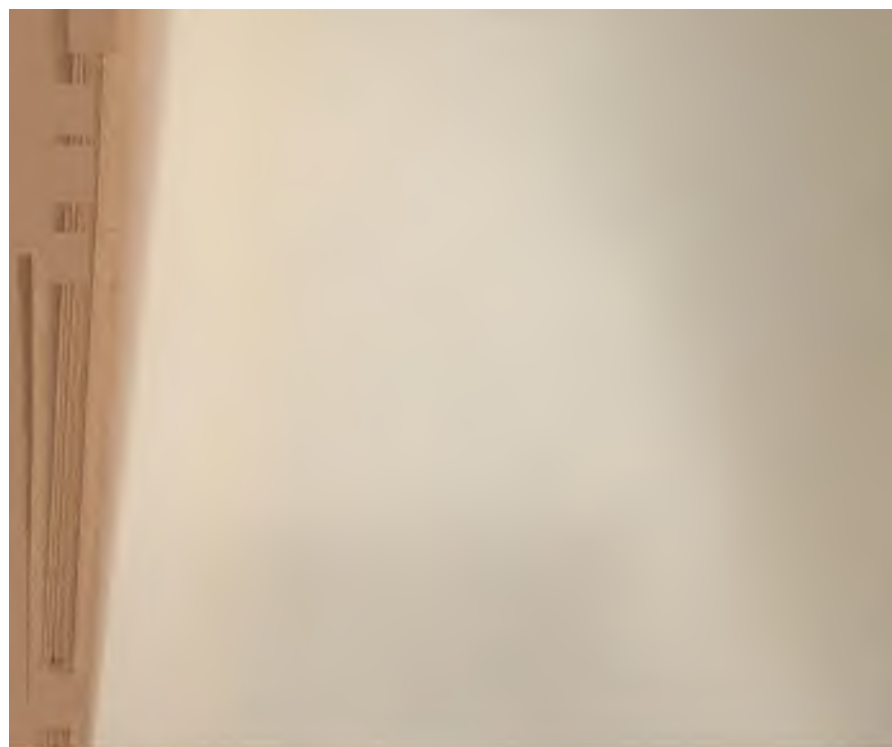
Still further changes were going on in Mr. Verbosego's expression, and his heart beat quicker and lighter as the stranger particularized. The increased vigor and activity of the heart sent blood to his face and removed its cadaverous look and despondency was replaced with hope. "Well," he said to himself, "I am known in remote parts of the county as a capitalist and money loaner. It's a pleasing thought."

He turned his back on the drug store, took Mr. Wilson home with him and loaned him the amount he wanted; and in a day or so he was developing plans, apparently with the intention of enjoying life many years yet, and feeling that



"I CANNOT ENDURE THIS CONDITION OF MIND ANY LONGER."





his existence was of paramount importance to the world. In fact, he imagined that nature would not perform her functions properly in his absence. He quit feeling his pulse and looking in the mirror at his tongue. Only one thing now stood in the way of his complete happiness; if he only were a large man physically, he could wield more power in the world, and command more respect. He was heard to say once that the Creator must have been absent minded when he made the plans and specifications for the construction of some men; consequently the proportions between the mental and physical parts were unreasonable. Yet he condoled himself with the idea that it was more desirable to have a surplus of brain than body.

Mr. Verbosego's neighbors were again getting the benefit of his street lectures on how to make money and run the government. His talks were so profuse with uncommon words which he picked out of metropolitan newspapers, that he acquired the reputation among the illiterate as a fine conversationalist; but the more intelligent people only laughed at his expletives and incorrect pronounciation and use of words.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### MEETING OF OLD FRIENDS.

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Bruce had a good many visitors from their old home in Pennsylvania. They were excellent entertainers, and hospitable to a fault. Their reputation in this respect was as wide as their acquaintance. Their latch string was always out, but their old eastern neighbors were especially welcome. When they had visitors from that part of the country they usually invited in some of the Jamburg people who now lived in Des Moines.

On one occasion Fred Instep was the favored person. Mr. and Mrs. Bruce had a desire to show Rev. Mr. Rhodes, pastor of the Jamburg Congregational church, what a boy could develop into in spite of early habits and training. While Fred, for certain reasons, was not a regular associate of the Bruce family, they were, through the goodness of their hearts, willing to extend their courtesy to him. His handsome face, fine physique, good clothes and ready wit enabled him to make himself interesting in any company. He was frequently seen around the edges of the very best society in the city. Very few at his present home knew anything of his former irregularities. Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes gave him a hearty greeting.

"Why, Fred—I beg your pardon, Mr. Instep—I'm very glad to meet you," said Mr. Rhodes. "This is another reminder of bygone days—days when you were running around Jamburg barefoot, catching butterflies with your new straw hat."

"Yes," replied Fred, "and sometimes failing to catch them on account of a stone bruise on my heel."



"I suppose, Fred, that you are beginning to realize that those were your happiest days."

"I don't remember," said Fred, "so much about my bare feet and catching butterflies as I do about getting so awfully tired sitting in that old Congregational church listening to orthodox sermons."

They all laughed and the preacher showed a deep blush on his face. But he was ready with a retort.

"I presume, Fred, you are now taking out your revenge for that punishment on innocent jurymen and judges who are compelled to listen to your technical arguments in the court room."

"Well," responded Fred, "laying all jokes aside, I must confess that I was somewhat edified by the drippings from the sanctuary of that church."

The company indulged in hearty laughter at the continued dashes of repartee that passed between the preacher and the lawyer, and then engaged in pleasant reminiscences of the old home in the Keystone state.

They had repaired to the shade of an elm in the front yard, when Fred remarked, "That is Mr. Elbridge's residence, isn't it?"

"Yes, there's where they live," Mrs. Bruce answered.

"I have met Miss Elbridge," Fred remarked, "and found her to be an unusually pleasant young lady."

"All of her acquaintances will agree with you in that opinion," said Mrs. Bruce.

"How neat and tidy they keep their premises," said Fred.

"Yes; and it is just as nice and orderly inside the house as on the outside."

"Are they pretty well fixed, financially?" Fred asked.

"They are very comfortable and safe in that respect," was the answer.

"I suppose Mr. Elbridge has retired from business."

"Yes; but his income is quite sufficient to leave a handsome surplus after their living and expenses."

"I don't see," remarked Fred, "how life can be interesting to those people who have nothing to do but live."

"Nothing to do but live!" Mrs. Bruce looked indignant. "Why, Mr. and Mrs. Elbridge are seldom idle, and a busier person than their daughter, Loretta, is not to be found anywhere. It is true, not much of her time is devoted to earning a livelihood or making money, but she does a great deal for the benefit of others as well as for self-improvement. Many individuals and homes are made happier by her handiwork. She is one of the most active members of the leading woman's club of the city, she writes valuable articles for the magazines, does considerable missionary and charitable work, is one of the most efficient and popular Sabbath School teachers in the city; and besides all this, the needlework and painting and drawing she does, mostly in preparing presents for her relatives and young friends, would seem enough to keep the average woman busy most of the time."

"I understand," said Fred, "she has a fine collection of curios and souvenirs."

"Yes; she has rather a unique one."

"I have heard just enough about that collection to create a strong desire to see it. What's the matter with our going over and taking a look at it?"

A new interest seemed to take possession of Fred as he spoke; he almost rose from his chair. His face beamed with animation when Mrs. Bruce said, "I presume she would be pleased to have us do so. Would you care to go over?" she added, addressing Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes.

They all expressed a willingness to go.

"I suspect," said Mrs. Bruce, "it is the owner of the collection instead of the curios, that Mr. Instep wants to see."

"Well, now, Mrs. Bruce, how much could you blame me if I should plead guilty to a desire to see an interesting young lady?"

"A very commendable trait, indeed," replied Mrs. Bruce.



"Ruth, come here, please." The little four-year-old girl came tripping over the lawn from her play in the back yard. Mrs. Bruce kissed her daughter and said, "Take this note, darling, and give it to Miss Elbridge."

"All right," and away the little tot went like a fairy, over the dooryard and across the street.

The note which Mrs. Bruce had stepped into the library and written, read as follows: "Miss Elbridge: Would it be agreeable to you for us, accompanied by our guests, including Mr. Fred Instep, to spend a few minutes with your cabinet?"

The little messenger had not been gone five minutes when she came, in an easy hip-o-ty-hop gait across the yard. The breeze was against her, causing her long, glossy brown hair to float out in the air. The exercise had brought a beautifying flush to her face. The company envied the mother as she received the answer and planted a kiss on her little daughter's crimson cheek.

Ruth drew a long breath and said, "Miss Elbridge said she would trust me with a verbal answer, and that she would be pleased to have you all come over."

The expression of Fred's countenance, together with his visible restlessness, showed that he was occupied with something of unusual interest. He was first to move in the direction of the Elbridge residence. As he stepped on to the porch he gave his fine, dark brown mustache some careful twists and felt of his necktie. His smile of assurance indicated that he knew his brain was on straight. No imperial court ever witnessed a more graceful greeting than Fred Instep gave Miss Elbridge at this meeting.

The visitors were at once ushered into the large library, one entire side of which was occupied by a cabinet containing a remarkable variety of interesting objects gathered from all parts of the world. Besides this, there was an annex to the library, containing bulky specimens, such as buffalo heads, skeletons of sea animals, large geodes, etc.



Miss Elbridge's cabinet was conspicuous for the number of specimens rarely seen in private collections. Many of her curios were useful in the study of nature and ancient history.

One of the first remarks Fred made was: "I suppose, Miss Elbridge, these things cost you a handsome pile of money?"

Miss Elbridge threw her eyes around the crowd and uttered one of her charming, musical ha! ha! which few women are able to imitate, and said, "Not a cent, Mr. Instep. I trust I may not be reckoned a sponge when I state that everything in this whole collection was donated by friends; furthermore, I do not mean to be immodest when I say that begging had no part in the collection of these specimens."

She went on telling how various articles came into her possession. "This," she said, pointing to an elephant's tusk, four and a half feet long, and valued at two hundred and twenty-five dollars, "was given me by an acquaintance who killed the animal himself in central Africa; this boomerang is a present from Dr. Vertebra, our family physician, who bought it of the natives in Australia, after having them throw it to prove its genuineness; and this huge inhabitant of the air," referring to a stuffed albatross, "was sent to me by a sailor boy, a former schoolmate, who caught it off the coast of New Zealand with a fish hook baited with a piece of meat."

After making a cursory inspection of nearly everything, Fred suggested, "Miss Elbridge, to set these rooms off, you ought to have an aquarium in one containing rare specimens of fish and some cages with a variety of tropical birds in the other."

"O, no!" promptly responded Miss Elbridge, with a vigorous shake of the head, "I couldn't think of making an animate being live such an unnatural life. There would be no pleasure to me in what would cause discomfort to another being."

"Good evening, Doctor," said Mrs. Bruce, then turning to Miss Elbridge, "Have you sick folks in the house?"

"Mother has one of her severe headaches."

"Then why did you allow us to trouble you? We evidently have annoyed your mother."

"O, no," said Dr. Vertebra, who had just come down stairs, "there's no harm done; Mrs. Elbridge is feeling quite comfortable now."

Dr. Vertebra joined the party in the library and added somewhat to the interest of the conversation by reason of his having seen many of the specimens in their native countries. His descriptions and comments were interesting and instructive. Speaking of the albatross, he said, "I have seen them in the South Pacific ocean sail about the ship eleven minutes at a time without flapping or making any other perceptible motion of their wings —"

"I suppose," interrupted Fred, "they take a nap on the wing when they get sleepy?"

"I don't know," said the doctor, "I never caught one napping — but I've caught them with a fish hook."

"How wide can they spread their wings?"

"The first one we caught measured ten and a half feet from tip to tip."

While examining the boomerang, Mr. Bruce asked the doctor, "What kind of people are they who use this remarkable weapon?"

"They are the lowest and weakest specimen of humanity, both mentally and physically, in the world; and live the nearest like brutes."

"It would take a long time," said Fred, "to bring them up to your ideal of civilization and manhood, Albert."

"It will never be done," said Mr. Bruce; "all savage races will soon be extinct. They can survive this increasing pressure of civilization only a few more generations. The stronger people, only, will be able to stand up against the next two hundred years of human advancement. The

world is inaugurating an era of invention and commerce that will carry railroads, telegraph lines and all other modern improvements into every country and island on the globe, and the uncivilized races cannot long survive the radical changes this will necessitate."

"How would you justify your prediction?" Fred asked. "It would naturally be expected that civilized methods of living would improve those people."

"History corroborates my assertion, and it probably depends on scientific facts, but which would be as hard to explain as the fact that a hickory tree will die if the ground be stirred above its roots, while many other kinds of trees would thrive under the same cultivation. I think the world will make more true advancement during the twentieth century than it has during any five centuries previous to that —"

"Will you please excuse me?" said Miss Elbridge, "I want to go up and see Mother a few minutes. But I'm sorry to lose this discussion; it is very interesting."

"I agree with you, Mr. Bruce, to a certain extent," said Mr. Rhodes, "in regard to the encouraging prospects for the near future."

"So do I," said Fred, "the grooves of progress are well greased now, and I think she'll slide along pretty fast from this time on. I presume some of us will live to see air ships used for transportation purposes; and wealthy families will have their private aerial yachts to carry them around the world, and no family can be in the swim without one."

"Those are cheerful prophecies, Mr. Instep," said Mrs. Bruce. "Perhaps in a few years," turning to her husband, "we can order out our yacht in the morning, fly over to Paris, attend an entertainment at the Grand Opera House and be at home next morning for breakfast. Won't it be delightful to cross the Atlantic altogether at night while reposing sweetly in the arms of Morpheus above the clouds, oblivious of the raging billows below?"



"That, to be sure would be progress," said Mr. Bruce, "but the true progress will be made along a different line. Labor-saving inventions and improved machinery are great luxuries, but the world wants a better man — a happier man — one more capable of comprehending life and appreciating and enjoying the world with its blessings and comforts."

"Well," Fred remarked, "if we don't enjoy what we have in this world I think it is our own fault."

"To a certain extent, you are right, Fred," replied Mr. Bruce. "In a remote sense we are to blame; but why do intelligent, thinking people, even good Christians, admit that it is a debatable question as to whether the pain and discomforts of this life do not overbalance the pleasures and enjoyments to such an extent as to make it not worth living?"

Fred looked more serious than he had before and said, "I have not put sufficient thought on the question to be able to venture an answer."

"It is because," said Mr. Bruce, his face beaming with assurance, "there is so much disease and deformity in the world. Disease not only of the human body and mind, but diseased society and deformed religion, diseased morals and morbid ambition. These conditions are what incapacitate us for the full and true enjoyment of life."

"What are we to understand," Fred asked, "by diseased society?"

"Society," Mr. Bruce commenced, "takes a wrong view of certain things: for instance, it sets such a high reward on wealth and superficial appearances that a large portion of the human family are very unhappy because they are unable to make a showing in this respect, and others commit serious crimes in their efforts to attain these conditions. To sum up the whole fact, society allows ostentation and superficiality to transcend worth and merit; and besides causing a vast amount of trouble, this hinders intellectu-

and moral advancement, because it enables people to acquire social standing — which most persons desire — without these virtues."

"What do you mean by deformed religion?" Fred rolled his eyes round toward Rev. Mr. Rhodes.

"I mean any religion that does not take the meek and lowly Jesus for its example to live by as well as to preach and teach by."

"And morbid ambition, I suppose, means any kind that hasn't a good motive back of it?"

"Yes. All will admit that it is very common to see a person with ambition and aspirations so strong that, for the sake of gaining wealth, honor and influence, he will sacrifice principle and resort to any measures that seem expedient, regardless of the rights and welfare of others."

"Well, I'm through with the witness, so I'll turn him over to you, Mr. Rhodes, for cross-examination." Fred laughed, arose and walked across the room.

"It is a fact," said Mr. Rhodes, "that self-aggrandizement is too prominent a factor in the motives and aspirations of men."

"A very unfortunate fact, too," said Dr. Vertebra, "for so many have no ability to attract attention to themselves except through their worldly possessions, and the result of this is to make wealth an abomination oftener than a blessing."

"Do you think," Fred asked, "It will ever be different?" Will the time come when money will not rule the world?"

"It must come. The complete Christianization of the world has been ordered by the Creator, but this cannot be accomplished while filthy lucre is man's god; because the inordinate desire for, and possession of wealth that now prevails crowd out many of the elements of character which are essential to the true Christian spirit."

Fred continued his questions: "What makes you so sure this change will take place soon?"



"Because circumstances and events of recent date show that conditions are ripening for an epoch in human history. Science is making greater strides than it ever did before. Just think of the wonderful inventions and discoveries that are calculated to civilize and enlighten the world; and Dr. Vertebra will tell you that recent investigations and discoveries assure greater progress in the prevention and cure of disease during the last quarter of the nineteenth century than was made in the last five hundred years. And the elevation of woman, which is going on so rapidly, will be a great civilizer and purifier of the race. No nation ever makes any progress where the women are kept in the background —"

"No," interrupted Fred, "of course there couldn't be any progress in a country where men have all the power; for in that case there would be a stag-nation."

Fred Instep had such a bright, happy way of inserting his repartee into serious conversation that it scarcely ever caused offense.

"I think," said Mr. Rhodes, "we may set Fred down as a woman suffragist."

"That's right. Woman has no better friend than I."

Mrs. Rhodes, who had been a quiet listener, said, "Do you not get discouraged, Mr. Bruce, at the bitter opposition to reform movements?"

"If I were a professional reformer I might."

"It has always been a mystery to me," said Miss Elbridge, who had just returned from her mother's room, "why so many good people oppose unquestionable reforms."

"There are various reasons for that," said Mr. Bruce, "The principal one is because a reform is always a condemnation of established habits and practices of a large class of people; and the selfishness that exists in the average individual makes him reluctant to acknowledge that he is wrong, and change his ways. Jealousy and prejudice also are prominent factors in this opposition. A person may r



free to endorse an idea because it is advocated by a certain sect or party; but the bitterest, stubbornest and most unreasonable opposition comes from those whose business or financial interests are affected."

"Yet the world is constantly growing better," said Miss Ellbridge.

"Yes," said Mrs. Bruce, "I think we can see it in all the affairs of life. We call our children's attention to the fact that they enjoy many blessings and privileges that were denied us; our mothers used to talk the same way to us, and very likely their mothers did so with their children, and so on back."

"Yes," remarked Fred, "and we may be sure that Rachel and Jezebel told their children the same old story."

"One of the drawbacks to moral and religious reformation," said Mr. Bruce, "is the insincerity of many who pose as exemplary citizens and Christians. When the unregenerate see that reformers do not practice what they preach, they lose faith in reform movements."

"Don't you think," asked Fred, "some of their teachings are impracticable—that is, of the religious people? For instance, they tell us to love our enemies and pray for them."

The whole company smiled and turned their eyes toward Rev. Rhodes, who said, "Fred, couldn't you pray for your enemies?"

"I guess I could come as near it as many others do. I'm inclined to think most of those who pray for their enemies, do so with their lips only. If their hearts should speak out, their prayer would go about like this: "O, Lord, forgive my enemies all their sins except the ones they committed against me; give them a little hell for that."

"I think," said Mr. Rhodes after a suppressed smile had faded from his face, "Mr. Insey's description will apply only to exceptional cases."

"That may be," replied Fred, "but I feel safe in saying that Albert Bruce's great-grandchildren will one day see the

dawn of the millenium. To bring it about, by that time, a new race would have to be made."

"You have expressed the right thought, Fred. That's what will be done. No, you can not make a man over again — nor a nation, nor a race; but a new race will be produced after a few generations that will meet the requirements of the millenium."

"A few generations," repeated Fred, "that is rather indefinite; but even to be liberal as to what it means, it is presuming a good deal to predict such a condition of the race in so short a time; since so many centuries have been required to bring it up to its present status. I think when we look round and see the shortcomings of man, Mr. Bruce cannot blame us, although we recognize him as quite a thinker and philosopher, for saying he is a little wild in his calculations. However, he may have some movement or discovery in view that will revolutionize the world in a short time. How is it, Albert?" patting Mr. Bruce on the knee.

"The revolution," Mr. Bruce deliberately commenced, "will come within the specified time, even though 'few generations' be quite limited. So far as efficient methods are concerned, they are already being discovered. It will be done by banishing the dark cloud that now obstructs man's moral vision, and prevents his appreciating the difference between righteousness and iniquity. The average civilized man can readily distinguish between them now, but it seems that only a few are able to realize that the reward for right living is not simply a promise for the future, but may be a present enjoyment. The main occupation of every human being is to secure the greatest possible amount of enjoyment and comfort, and they seem to think that to attain this object is to accumulate wealth, attract attention and gain influence. An eagerness to accomplish this purpose leads to the violation of every article in the decalogue. But with his moral vision clear, man will see th

it pays always to do right. Under the present state of society, most persons manifest a greater desire to be endorsed by, and more fears of being condemned by their fellows than by their Creator."

"I never looked at the question just in that way before," said Mrs. Rhodes, "but that certainly is the way we may often account for people's evil conduct."

"That is right," said Dr. Vertebra, "many good citizens seem to think so long as society does not condemn them they are all right."

"I am anxious," said Fred, "to hear how the new race that Mr. Bruce speaks of is going to be produced."

"It will be produced as our fine specimens of domestic animals and fruits and vegetables were, by an enlightened process of breeding and cultivation. Up to the present time man has exercised his best thoughts and energies in making inventions and discoveries for his present use and convenience; but the time is at hand when his talents will be devoted largely to the improvement of himself, physically and mentally. But this cannot be done to any notable degree as long as society and the law allow children to be born into the world with weak, diseased bodies and dwarfish intellects, through the marriage of invalids and semi-idiot."

"Do you think," Fred asked, "this can be prevented? I understand, of course, that by the terms invalids and semi-idiot, you mean persons with weak constitutions and dull intellects."

"I certainly believe it can and will be done. What do you think about it, Dr. Vertebra? This subject is in your line of thought."

"I am inclined to think," the doctor answered, "there is something more than theories and air castles in Mr. Bruce's ideas. There are many forces at work in many parts of the world that may be destined to promote the changes he predicts. The rapid advancement that is being made in the science of medicine will be a powerful agency in the im-



provement of the human race, and the world is advancing in other respects also, faster than it ever did before. Truth is supplanting error and prejudice in many countries. Think of the wonderful change a quarter of a century has wrought in Japan; and a revolution certainly will begin in China before the close of the present century; France is preparing to erect a monument to the memory of Victor Hugo for what he said in the interest of humanity, but she exiled him less than half a century ago for saying those same things; John Brown was hanged in eighteen hundred and fifty-nine on account of his zeal for oppressed humanity, and now the civilized world is singing his praise for that same zeal. I believe that movements for the improvement of man in the future will receive more encouragement than they have in the past."

"If you gentlemen keep on, you will soon have a paradise right here in this wicked world.." Fred rolled his keen penetrating eyes toward Mr. Bruce.

"Only for the blindness of man," Mr. Bruce replied, "this world would be a paradise; and this blindness is going to be removed."

"What wonderful faith!" exclaimed Fred.

"My faith is just strong enough to make me wish—if it would not be sacrilege—that my sojourn on earth might have been postponed two or three centuries."

"You had better be contented, Albert," Fred suggested, "and enjoy the good things of the present age and simply allow your imaginations to carry you into the future ages, when peace and perfection will reign on earth. I think it's fun to witness the ups and downs of life and engage in a contest for supremacy once in a while. It makes life interesting."

"I have never anticipated perfection in the human race, but I believe that man will finally exist on earth, as was originally intended, in the likeness and image of his Creator, which means Truth, Love, Light, Justice"

ity. In that day the successful man will be the one who does a reasonable amount of good to his family, the race and himself, without interfering with the rights of others; while at the present time, the only condition necessary to entitle one to be pronounced successful in life is that he accumulate more wealth, regardless of methods, than he has any use for. The time is coming when this will be regarded as extremely absurd—and should be now—for there is no attainment that requires so little brains and intellect as the acquirement of property. Yet we must admit that many of the large fortunes have been acquired by brainy men. But it is easier for a person to concentrate all his talents and energies on the one purpose of making money than on any other.

"A nobler life instead of greater possessions should be the popular motto. When this condition obtains each one will think for himself, public favors will come through merit instead of expediency, there will be no hospitals and one small prison will be adequate for a whole nation, death from disease will be as rare as it is now by lightning, there will be no homely faces or disproportioned bodies, every woman will be a beauty and every man handsome—"

A hearty ha! ha! came from every throat. Mr. Bruce smiled and said "It is no laughing matter—that is, nothing to ridicule. The all-wise Creator intended it so. It can be proven by the scriptures. Search them from Genesis to Revelations and you will find that in all cases where the personal appearance of men and women who received commissions and special favors from God, are described, they were 'comely and fair to look upon,' and their history shows that they were mentally and physically strong. As examples, I refer you to Joseph Moses, David and Solomon."

The door bell rang and on answering it Miss Elbridge found Ruth Bruce standing on the porch. "Miss Elbridge," the child said, "will you please tell Mamma that Dwina is getting restless and would like to have her come home?"



Miss Elbridge returned to the library and said, "Mrs. Bruce, your daughter, Ruth, is at the door and says her sister Dwina, would like to have you come home, but I would suggest that you have all the children come over here, for I do not want this pleasant, interesting visit to be interrupted."

"That would please them. Well, tell Ruth to bring them over."

As soon as Ruth received the answer, away she went in a hop and a skip gait across the street. She was in a great hurry, but stopped at the edge of the door yard to fix her garter, and while performing this act she cried out, "Orvil! Dwina!"

Orvil came running around the corner of the house from the back yard just as Dwina popped through the door on to the porch.

"Come, we're going over to Elbridge's."

"Our children are all in love with Miss Elbridge," Mrs. Bruce remarked. "Nothing pleases them better than to come to her house."

The vigorous scream of a child was heard; every one hurried to the door; Orvil was taking Dwina up in his arms. She was so delighted with the idea of going to Elbridge's that she danced off the porch backwards. They were nearly across the street when Dwina said, "Let me down, Orvil; I'm not hurt much."

As soon as her feet touched the ground she ran and threw herself in to the arms of her father who had started to meet them, and said, "Papa, did you think I was hurt?"

Mrs. Bruce, who was standing on the sidewalk, heard the words; a smile came to her face and tears to her eyes, but Miss Elbridge was first to kiss the child. The plucky little girl insisted on walking up the steps into the door yard. Miss Elbridge threw her arms around Ruth also, and planted a couple of kisses on her plump, rosy cheek and said, "Were you afraid your little sister was badly hurt?"



"O, no; I knew there was nothing serious by the way she cried. We fall off things nearly every day, but it never hurts us much."

"Orvil," said Mr. Rhodes, "Dwina makes a pretty big load for a six year old boy to carry, doesn't she?"

"No, not very. Why, Mr. Rhodes, I can lift you. Do you want me to try it?" and so saying, the boy threw his arms around Mr. Rhodes' thighs and raised him clear of the ground, apparently with ease.

"Well, doesn't that beat all!" exclaimed Mrs. Rhodes.

"Would you like to try me, Orvil?" Fred asked.

"Yes, of course I would," and the little giant threw back his shoulders, drew a long breath and started toward Fred with resolution showing in his countenance; but his father said:

"No, Orvil; I would rather you would not undertake it." Then in an undertone, "He is so ambitious. I am afraid he might strain himself. He is too young for over-exertion—but I believe he could lift you, Mr. Instep."

Fred's weight was a hundred and ninety pounds.

"Orvil," said Fred, "you ought to join the circus and give exhibitions as the strong boy."

"No, sir," quickly responded Ruth, "my brother shall not join the circus. They're wicked people that go with the circus."

"I don't think there's any danger," said Orvil.

"I can lift you," Miss Elbridge," said Ruth; and before the former had time to protest, the little four-year-old girl threw her arms around her and laid out her strength with a resolution that would have done credit to an athlete, and actually succeeded in raising the hundred and twenty-five pounds of feminine humanity a few inches from the ground. But Miss Elbridge, feeling a bit embarrassed at the performance, made some resistance which caused Ruth to stagger and they both fell flat on the ground. Of course, this increased the embarrassment; the young lady lost no time

in regaining her feet, but a deep blush of good natured chagrin spread over her face. The situation was somewhat ludicrous, and the emotions of the company were a mixture of humor and sympathy. Ruth enjoyed the accident and laughed heartily, but when Miss Elbridge's countenance caught her eye, she said, taking her by the hand, "I beg your pardon, Miss Loretta. It's too bad. I didn't mean to throw you down right before all these people."

This was a great relief as it furnished vent to suppressed risibilities, and everybody laughed freely.

"What wonderful strength your children have," remarked Mrs. Rhodes.

Just then little Dwina put her arms around the dog Pluto's neck, the latter having followed the children across the street, and was standing off at one side, apparently an interested spectator, and said, "Pluto, let me lift you," but the dog objected and ran away.

Miss Elbridge seated all her visitors on the porch except the children who played up and down the lawn with Pluto. Orvil was soon seen in the forks of a tree, under pretense of fleeing from the bear, Pluto. Miss Elbridge, noticing a robin feeding in a distant part of the yard, remarked, "How pitiful to watch wild birds and animals seeking their living when they are constantly on the alert for enemies, knowing that they are liable to be molested and possibly killed at any moment. My heart always goes out in sympathy for them."

"Does not man obtain his livelihood under equally pitiable circumstances?" Mr. Bruce asked. Not only does he seek it amidst dangers, but he is obliged to watch it after it is secured to prevent his fellows from cheating him out of it.

"O, well," said Fred, "that's all right; I think making our living in the face of opposition and contriving to our own is what makes life interesting. The m



would have manna rained down upon him from heaven doesn't deserve a good living."

The romping of the children on the greensward was a good excuse for changing the subject.

"Childhood," remarked Dr. Vertebra, "is the only period in our lives that is not more or less thrown away."

"That is true," said Mr. Rhodes.

"With a certain qualification, Doctor," said Mr. Bruce, "I could endorse your assertion. Say voluntarily thrown away. Many a child's life is thrown away by its parents or guardian; but with enlightened guardianship a child's life may all be useful."

"I accept the amendment," the doctor replied.

"One of the most interesting features about children," said Mr. Rhodes, "is that their actions are governed by a combination of instinct and reason. I like to watch the instinctive actions of animals and birds in caring for their young, providing for their winter season and other vital matters; and when to these talents is added intelligence it becomes the more interesting."

"Children," remarked Miss Elbridge, "are innocent, and if they could only be kept so! Speaking of instinct in children—haven't you noticed that a child that is very dependent and almost helpless when accompanied by older persons, acts quite differently if it be with a child younger than itself? In the latter case it will seem to forget self and exercise great vigilance in protecting a younger brother or sister from danger. Is not this a kind of instinct?"

"It certainly is," said Mr. Rhodes, "but responsibility always inspires courage and confidence."

"A grand feature of childhood," remarked Fred, "is, that one day at that time is as long as ten, later in life. Why, I used to get as much enjoyment out of an afternoon's romp about the hills and forests of Pennsylvania as I now get out of a week's vacation in search for pleasure—and



perhaps I knew at the same time I would get a whipping on my return home for running off."

Whenever a remark of Fred's was accompanied with a feeling of humor, his very manner always provoked laughter. As soon as Mr. Rhodes could straighten up his face, he said:

"Another interesting fact about childhood is that the boy or girl is the index of the man or woman."

Mrs. Bruce looked at Fred with a serious, thoughtful expression. Her mind was evidently carried back to the scenes of Fred's childhood.

"What a glorious privilege it would be to live our lives over again," said Mr. Rhodes.

"How many persons in middle or advanced life have not entertained that wish?" Mr. Bruce asked.

Mrs. Rhodes, in a reflective mood, said, "I presume there are few who would be willing to live the same life over again."

"That evidently is true," said Mr. Bruce, "but all well-meaning persons would like the privilege of profiting by past experiences, in the repetition of their lives."

Miss Elbridge, who had been an attentive listener, said, in an earnest manner, "Do you people think it right to entertain such dissatisfaction with your lives as to want to live them over again? Haven't we had a sufficiency of example and precept ever since arriving at the age of moral and religious understanding to guide our conduct so that our lives might not be bitterly regretted? If so, then we ought not to complain of a misspent life." Smilingly, she continued, "I am tempted to accuse you of sacrilege. We deserve punishment if we have misspent our lives."

"Accept my commendation, Miss Elbridge," said Mr. Bruce; "there is wisdom in your remarks; and this suggests another thought concerning children and youth: every one will admit the surprising reluctance of young people to heed the advice and admonition of older and wiser heads—those

whom they know to be capable of advising them. It is very common for a young man to refuse to be admonished. Why is it? There is no other channel through which improvement in the moral, physical and pecuniary status of the race could be more rapidly effected than for young people to heed the advice of their elders, who desire their welfare."

"Yes," said Mr. Rhodes, "there is something in the nature of youth that gives them too much confidence in their own judgment in matters concerning their welfare. It makes them incorrigible."

Fred threw back his shoulders, leaned a little forward in his chair and, with unusual feeling, said, "Now, I propose we defend the children and youth; they are not altogether to blame, by any means, for their shortcomings. Parents often exercise poor judgment in the management of their children. They have too little charity for the active, restless nature of the child with its intense desires and impulses. They seem to forget their own childhood. It takes twenty-five years to make a man. It can't be done in a day by the mandates of a thoughtless parent. To insure a good, well balanced man or woman the child must have the sympathy of the parent and the parent must have the respect of the child. These conditions are often wanting, and it is as often the result of discipline too rigid and selfish, it is of too much liberty and petting. There is nothing so hard as the hard side of a parent's heart."

The speaker paused. There had not been a time during the hour and a half this little company was engaged in conversation when they were so breathlessly quiet. Mrs. Bruce was soon to turn her face to one side and reach for a little white handkerchief; her heart was going out to Fred Instep. She knew his history.

Miss Ettridge broke the silence: "I think there is nothing that governs a child like love. I find it so in my mischievous work. Increase a child's self respect and you increase his obedience for obedience and better conduct. A good

way to do this is to feed it with kindness, thus showing that you respect it. I believe that by these means most of the wretched little gamins down below the 'dead line' might be brought under control and developed into respectable men and women."

The conversation brought certain recollections so vividly to Fred's mind that a tear came to his eye.



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### A BIT OF FINANCIERING.

We left Fred with a tear in his eye, and we now find him with a scheme in his head.

"Doctor," he said, on meeting Dr. Vertebra on the street, "I understand you are going to take a vacation and do some traveling."

"That is my intention," was the reply.

"When do you think of starting, and where do you expect to go?"

"I calculate to leave about the first of November and spend the winter in Colorado and California."

"Will you have a smoke, Doctor?" said Fred, taking a couple of cigars from his pocket.

"No, I thank you, I do not indulge in the habit—never did."

"Then I suppose you do not miss the enjoyment of it. You'll have a fine trip; I almost envy you the pleasure of it. Let us go into Garton's and have a dish of ice cream; it is rather hot for September."

They sat down at a table farthest from any other customers. Fred was in one of his happy moods. He had the faculty of being able to assume this condition at will. The tone of his voice was unusually sympathetic, yet cheerful.

"Why do you take your vacation just at the beginning of the physician's busy season? I should think you would select a time when it would be the least detrimental to you financially."

"The busy season," said the doctor, "is just what I want to avoid, for my health demands a respite from the hardships incident to the winter practice."

"Is that so? I'm sorry to hear that, Doctor;—sorry for you and also for your patrons. You have a fine class of patients and they are unusually loyal to you; they will regret to have you go. Anything serious in the condition of your health?"

"Nothing necessarily alarming, yet it is serious enough to induce me to give up practice for a year or so. I have no organic disease, but my nervous system is in a somewhat dilapidated condition, and the probabilities are that if I continue my irregular habits in regard to eating and sleeping and hard study, I will soon be down with nervous prostration."

"And, of course," said Fred, "you appreciate the fact that in matters of health as well as a torn shirt, a stitch in time saves nine."

"Indeed, I do. I have always urged this theory to my patrons."

"But you wouldn't urge them to follow your example in this case, would you? That would not be business—to send a good customer out of the country would be robbing yourself."

Fred chuckled, yet there was a shade of seriousness in his expression. He continued:

"How long has your health been failing?"

"Fact is, I have never thoroughly recuperated from the exhaustion of my three year's medical course, preparatory to going into practice. I had always been accustomed to outdoor exercise, and sitting in my preceptor's office, reading twelve hours a day, then constant application to my text books of mornings and evenings while at medical college, reduced my vitality to a dangerous degree, and the instead of going on to a farm and working six months after finishing my course, I located here at once, continuing as devoted as ever to my books. To this was added the physician's duties with their hardships and irregular habits. This explains the necessity for a vacation."

"Then you are realizing the truth of another familiar adage, 'haste makes waste.'"

"I certainly am. I am now wasting time and money—and vitality—on account of having been in too great haste to get into practice after my college course."

"Well, Doctor, I hope you may realize all you expect from your trip and rest; and I trust that, with your qualifications, you will, after returning, make up for the time and money spent on the vacation."

"Thank you, I'll try to shape things to that end."

Pushing the empty dish to one side, turning toward the doctor, placing one elbow on the table and looking as generous as possible, Fred commenced:

"Doctor, I understand you are thinking of investing some of your surplus funds in a certain drug store in this city?"

"How do you get into these business secrets so easily?" said the doctor, with a smile.

"I learned it through a business deal with the owner of the drug store—one that he was compelled to make."

This set the doctor to thinking.

"Now," continued Fred, "if you have any money that wants to be earning something in the drug business, I can put you on to a much better deal than the one you are considering."

"What is it?" the doctor inquired.

"You know," Fred replied, "Pucker's addition is growing up very rapidly with a good, prosperous class of people, and as I own some real estate out there, I want to start a business center. There's already a grocery doing a good business there, and what is needed most is a drug store; and the best thing you can do is to let me put you up a building for that business. I'm sure that through a little effort on my part and yours, a dozen kinds of business will be represented out there inside a year or two."

Fred showed in three different Des Moines news-



papers, purporting to be from the citizens of Pucker's addition—though instigated by himself—expressing the need of a drug store in their neighborhood.

The day following the treat to the ice cream, Fred took Dr. Vertebra into his buggy, drove to Pucker's addition and showed him the prospect; and within a week a contract for a building was let, and the same leased to Dr. Vertebra for a term of three years, to be used as a drug store; possession to be given the first of May.

On Dr. Vertebra's return from his trip west he opened a drug store in the building Fred had prepared for the purpose, and being determined to avoid the hardships of the physician's vocation, he devoted all his time to the drug business and some special reading. The venture proved a success financially, and the doctor's health and strength were entirely restored; but at the end of three years he decided to sell his drug store and resume the general practice of medicine. On hearing of this, his landlord scented an opportunity. Fred Instep had as good a scent for opportunities as an Irish setter has for birds. He knew a family by the name of Piper a few miles in the country who were desirous of selling their large, improved farm and going into business in the city. Mrs. Piper imagined that she was fitted by nature for higher functions than farm life permitted her to exercise. Her two daughters had been to college and her son showed signs of good business qualities; therefore, the city was the place for them. Fred conceived the plan of trading for Dr. Vertebra's drug store and exchanging it, together with the building and some adjoining property, for Mr. Piper's farm. In this he succeeded beyond his expectations. He traded fourteen vacant suburban lots for the drug stock, which invoiced \$4,200.00. These lots were in a tract of land which Fred had recently purchased at \$75 per acre, or \$10.50 per lot; so that it will be seen that he got twenty-nine times as much for the lots as he paid for them a short time before. To make the price low

reasonable, Fred showed the doctor deeds for adjacent lots, in which the consideration was \$300.00; but these were fictitious prices, for the lots were exchanged for personal property which, by mutual consent, was also placed many times above its actual value. This is a trick of real estate dealers, intended to deceive the unwary.

And then the doctor was reminded of the fact that vacant lots twice as far from the business center were selling for more than he was paying for these; hence the bargain seemed like a fair one. But when he learned that his lots were subject to an overflow of four or five feet from the Des Moines river occasionally, he concluded that he was not an expert at handling real estate. He now had \$147.00 worth of unsalable property for his \$4,200.00 worth of first-class drugs. And to bear out the old adage that misfortunes never come singly a few days after this transaction Dr. Vertebra suffered a loss of several thousand dollars by fire. This was followed by the foreclosure of mortgages, at a heavy loss, on some other pieces of real estate he owned; and to cap the climax, his attorney, whom he employed to collect some claims, played false, causing him to lose several hundred dollars, which reduced his earthly possessions to nothing but his library and his surgical instruments.

Mr. Piper fared but little better in Fred's hands than did Dr. Vertebra. By shrewd scheming, yet keeping within the bounds of the law, Fred traded his recently acquired drug stock and building, together with some other property, all of which was worth not more than \$8,000.00, for Mr. Piper's \$18,000.00 farm. But the Piper family consoled themselves with the happy thought that they had exchanged the tame monotony and drudgery of farm life for the excitement and pleasures of the city.



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### DISAPPOINTED.

I had come to look with suspicion on unusually satisfactory and happy conditions and prospects in connection with my practice. So often had these conditions been promptly followed by aggravating and discouraging experiences. About a year after getting rid of my last competitor I was enjoying some reflections on the pleasing situation. I had a large practice and was waiting on my patrons just as I pleased without any fears of fault finding. It was very gratifying to be in a position to display a bit of independence and indifference to those who had dropped me and encouraged my competitors with their patronage. How humiliating it must be for them to have to come back to me! I could even rebuke them with impunity if they acted contrary to my wishes.

My friends assured me that my reputation and influence were such as to preclude the possibility of having to be at the trouble and expense of driving out any more competitors. I would no longer make pensioners of truckling henchmen. I speculated on what to do with the reputation and prestige I had gained. Up to this time I had been busy taking care of the present, but the time had now come for me to begin to realize some of the dreams of my earlier days. The few thousand dollars I had saved must make for my wife and me a conspicuous place in society. My wife was very ambitious in that direction, and I was willing to gratify her. Rich, fashionable clothes and unusual self-assurance would compensate for her lack of education, culture and experience. The more intelligent people had moved away and we had resolved to dominate the social realms of Petville and



make this a stepping-stone to social distinction in larger fields—possibly the Capital city. I even had my eye on political favors and prominence.

But while we were indulging in reveries of future glory, made possible by my absolute monopoly, we were astounded, shocked and chagrined by the news that an experienced, well educated physician was locating in Petville. This was torture.

I at once set about inspecting the newcomer's personality and investigating his antecedents. I wanted to locate his vulnerable points—most everybody has some—and when I found them I would order out my battalion of henchmen in battle array and we would let fly our poisoned arrows of calumny and slander.

My new competitor proved to be none other than Dr. Vertebra of Des Moines. I had known him by sight for a few years and had learned of his recent misfortunes. It was a relief. "This man," I said to myself, "has several vulnerable points. I will make short work of him. He is crippled and I will have no trouble to keep him down. I will inform the syndicate that he is nothing but a druggist, and that he failed in business in Des Moines; and other things will be brought up in time, but these will make a good starter. The fact must be constantly kept before the female population that the new doctor is a single man; they will forget that I acquired my practice and reputaton mostly before getting married."

After Dr. Vertebra opened his office and announced himself ready for business, I was occupied largely in watching him and also the people; was concerned about his actions, and as to how he would be received by the community. He was an intelligent looking man, social and genial by nature; but there were unmistakable marks of trouble and worry on his countenance. His misfortunes had effected him seriously. I sought opportunities to converse with him and

found him to be well informed on general topics and especially devoted to his profession.

In a short time some of the most prominent families were employing Dr. Vertebra. This surprised me, for I thought circumstances and conditions were all against him. Yet I had some secret forebodings of disappointment and trouble on his account. As a means of forestalling his success, I wrote the following letter to Dr. Sycophantool, who was located in a neighboring town:

"Dear Doctor:—

You, of course, appreciate the fickleness of human nature. People are liable to do strange things. While I have no fears of any danger, to speak of, to my business on account of Dr. Vertebra's presence here, it would be well for you to join me in the work of controlling the practice around Petville; for you know there are a number of people in this neighborhood, and especially in the direction of your territory, who are indifferent about employing me, and these generally patronize you; but while there is another physician in Petville he will get their patronage. Now, I trust it will require no instructions from me to enable you to render efficient aid in convincing the people that Dr. Vertebra is not the doctor for them to employ. Have your special friends to circulate the report that he is only a druggist and was not recognized by the profession in Des Moines where he practiced a number of years."

Dr. Sycophantool at first scorned my proposition; and, making a confidant of the local druggist, he showed him the letter and said, "Does Dr. Fussanfeathers imagine that I can be induced to join him in a nefarious scheme like that after his unfair, unprofessional, ungentlemanly treatment of me? No, sir; it is not necessary for him to give me instructions; I became familiar with his methods a few years ago."

But after he heard that some of his substantial old customers had employed Dr. Vertebra, and I had a talk with



him, face to face, he became as pliant as potter's clay. I promised that he should always be my preference whenever a patron of mine demanded a consultation. This pleased him immensely, because he knew my endorsement of him in this way would prevent my disparaging his ability. From this time on we were occasionally in consultation, but I always had my own way about the case. Other physicians who came in contact with Dr. Sycophantool accused him of being designing, tricky and arbitrary, but after our reconciliation I always found him as subservient as a Chinese valet.

I tried to avoid all signs of alarm, but on discovering that some of the leading church people and influential farmers were patronizing my new competitor, and that he was boarding with Mrs. Plotter, which would keep the hands of this valuable henchman tied, I began to worry and study up schemes for damaging him. I reminded Jo Blagger that he was at present enjoying a monopoly of his business largely through shrewdly managed help from me a few months ago in keeping out a would-be competitor of his. I had no trouble to enlist him in my services, for there was nothing—except a glass of beer or a good dinner—that Jo enjoyed so well as to pass a droll but burning criticism on some one. His remarks were nearly always heavily shaded with vulgarity. This feature would help to provoke laughter, which in the eyes of the vulgar, often added strength to the slur. Not even the most dignified, modest woman was spared the lash of his slimy tongue. When some one remarked that Dr. Vertebra was a regular attendant at church, Blaggar said, "Of course. He likes to stand in with the preacher so that when he furnishes material for a funeral sermon, the preacher will divide up the fee—and you can bet your damned life he'll furnish plenty of funerals if he gits any practice."

A young lady, whose form Jo Blaggar criticised, hearing



of his remarks, retorted with, "Jo Blaggar always reminds me of a big frog trying to walk erect, like a man."

Blaggar's habit of making indiscreet remarks about unoffending persons had become so proverbial that a portion of the community seemed to think he had a right to make a blackguard of himself; and, instead of resenting the indignity, they would encourage him by laughing. It was unaccountable that there was so little resentment, for it was well understood that he could not stand retaliation. Almost any kind of a retort would silence him.

After his wife died he soon began to pay special attention to the fair sex; but, owing to his reputation he made slow progress, the ladies not wanting to run the risk of embarrassment by a shocking expression from their beau.

There was a Miss Wormwood in the town who had passed the period in life when women usually get married. There were various reasons that might be alleged for her celibacy. She was not very approachable, did not draw men toward her. In fact, the atmosphere about her might have suggested the idea that she floated down from the coast of Greenland at the breaking up of winter; and then if a sportsman had gone out hunting beauties he never would have drawn a bead on this woman. Her nose was unusually long and pointed downward, and she had a very prominent chin which was inclined upward. Jo Blaggar remarked to a crowd of loafers in a store where Miss Wormwood dropped in to purchase something:

"If I had that lantern-jawed old maid I would pull down her chin for fear it might knock off the end of her nose sometime when she shut her mouth too hard."

It is not known whether it was this remark that caused Miss Wormwood to shun Jo Blaggar in society and advise other women to do so, too.

"I'm afraid," said Miss Wormwood, "of that uncouth fellow's presence; he's so liable to say something that would

shock one's nerves. And then he don't know 'beans when the bag's open.' ”

“But he knows corn and oats all right,” said another woman.

Miss Wormwood's facial expression never changed. There was always a feeling of dissatisfaction depicted on her countenance. She never was known to laugh, but sometimes when anything was said or done that provoked the risibilities of the average person, there would be a muscular movement of her face—purely mechanical—which only indicated that she knew where the laugh came in.

Yet, after all, this unique specimen of feminine humanity had some redeeming traits; she could sing fairly well and could teach school some; but what proved to be the most redeeming trait of all was that she inherited a few thousand dollars—no more, however, than Jo Blaggar had—and besides, the latter had more than doubled his through the advantage of his monopoly.

It is said that politics makes strange bedfellows; money does, too, sometimes; Jo Blaggar married Miss Wormwood.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### MERITS OF DR. VERTEBRA.

While Jo Blaggar, aided by his new wife, rendered efficient service in helping me to obstruct Dr. Vertebra's progress, I could not expect much assistance from Mr. Verbosego, who had always worked in conjunction with Jo, for he was now out of active business, therefore was not particularly interested in maintaining monopolies, and besides, he was, a good portion of the time in that condition of mind that renders a man almost entirely oblivious to everything but his own misery. He had been under my treatment for several months, yet this did not enable me to use him as an object lesson in sustaining my reputation, for he seemed to be gradually growing worse. He was not known, however, as an invalid, because the trouble seemed to be altogether in his head, and nothing could be further from Jehu Verbosego's desires than to have it said there was anything wrong with his brain. It had always been his private opinion—sometimes semi-publicly expressed—that he was mentally as sound as any man on earth. He felt his pulse every hour in the day, never went near a mirror without looking at his tongue, and weighed himself twice a week. He spent an hour every evening before going to bed applying cold, wet cloths to his his head so that he might sleep. His mind vacillated from hope to despair. Several times each week he would ask me if I did not think his color was improving, or that his eyes were losing their dullness. I always answered in the affirmative. His symptoms were somewhat different from what they were during the long siege mentioned in a previous chapter. He now imagined th



would require the strictest economy to prevent his wealth from dwindling to an alarming degree. I was the only person, however, that was in possession of this secret. I took advantage of this peculiar condition of Mr. Verbosego's mind one day when he asked me how much he owed me:

"Mr. Verbosego," said I, "you have always been my friend and you have rendered me valuable service in a business way; your influence has thrown many a good patron into my hands and thereby many a dollar into my pocket. You always seem to know just what and to whom to say the thing that will do me the most good, and expose the incompetency of my opponents; therefore I propose to acknowledge the favor by making a reduction of 25 per cent on your bill."

"Well, Doctor," he said, "that is a compliment which I appreciate very highly," and with one of his patronizing smiles, he added, "I trust that in the near future you will realize that your compliment has not been lost on the desert air."

I felt sure he meant what he said, for he moved between two forces, egotism and avarice; and any recognition of his influence or his possessions always delighted him. My remarks made him feel good. I knew how to tickle his pride.

But there was nothing he enjoyed more than displaying his "conversational talents." A large majority of his hearers in the drug store, shoe shop and other places where he was wont to resort, cock himself back in a chair, with feet on a box or counter, and turn loose his vocabulary, were very illiterate, hence his expletives and "dictionary" words, which he was just as apt to use improperly as not, were taken as evidence of great learning; and as he was one of those persons who could enjoy honors secured wholly by fooling the people, he indulged in this pastime quite often. To reproach him for this, however, might be doing him an injustice, for his own erudition was so limited that he may have been unconscious of the fact that he was fooling anybody.

Some persons are so ignorant that they do not know they are ignorant.

My favor and compliment soon bore fruit; Mr. Verbosego went into the drug store, sat down and exercised his colloquial powers on his wonderful business exploits until the usual gaping crowd had gathered, when he said, "I wonder if Dr. Vertebra hopes to succeed in building up a compensatory practice here in the face of the formidable fact that the man he has to compete with is a physician of stupendous renown, while he, himself, is nothing but a druggist? Why, when I was in Des Moines the other day I learned from ample authority that Dr. Vertebra was not recognized by the medical profession of that city at all. And then he lost what money he had in injudicious financial maneuvers, and comes here as poor as Job's turkey. I don't want any truck with a man that can't hold his own from a financial standpoint, because I believe that a man's knowledge and wisdom depend on the amount of money he is able to accumulate. Yes, it is safe to say that a man's wealth is an infallible index to his intelligence."

Mr. Verbosego told many disparaging things about Dr. Vertebra, but while the more intelligent people looked askance at his slanderous stories and laughed at his bombast, I was pleased, for I knew the stories would have a damaging influence on Dr. Vertebra's prospects. Even some who knew they were not true repeated them as facts. One of the deplorable traits of human nature is the disposition to kick a man that is down, though his downfall may have been caused by an accident which the best manager is liable to meet with. On the other hand the one who, through good luck or accident, gets into a current that is carrying him to fortune, is sure to receive help that he does not need. Why is this? Albert Bruce would say it is because the world takes a wrong view of success in life.

In spite of my efforts to relieve him, Mr. Verbosego's condition seemed to be growing more alarming. I em-



played all the skill possible in the case, for I wanted to get him off my hands. It had become very annoying; I was tired of witnessing his languor, depression of spirits, irritability, hypochondriasis and listening to his complaints of sleeplessness, palpitation of the heart and distressing feeling in his head. However, I would get relief during his short seasons of buoyancy, which came at irregular intervals. At these times he would say, "Doc, I feel elegant today. I believe we were mistaken about there being anything wrong with my head. I guess it was only too much mental activity, together with grief and worry over misfortunes that caused a rush of blood to the head."

He would appear to have forgotten the evil foreboding and fears of insanity that had for a long time made life almost intolerable. He would say to himself, "Now, if I should have another bad spell I will not get alarmed and discouraged, but will remember that it won't last very many days."

But perhaps within twenty-four hours another attack of hypochondriasis would seize him, and he would say, "Great Heavens! this is the worst spell I ever had. I have new symptoms—never felt this way before. I'll never get over this. There's no use to hope against fate; my mind will surely go this time. Oh, my God! if I could only be restored to health again I would take a different view of life. I would not be so selfish. I've heard of persons who had brain diseases that caused them to lose their minds, but why should I be one of those miserable beings?"

He would be sure that he had an incurable brain disease and hope he might die before becoming insane. His thoughts were constantly on his troubles. He would frequently feel as if he were simply holding on to this mind by will power and could let it go at any moment. During the interims of these exacerbations he complained of symptoms of various chronic ailments which made attempts at diagnosis confusing. I treated him for organic heart dis-



ease, neurasthenia, anæmia and other more trifling ailments, but finally settled on the opinion that the trouble was chronic congestion of the brain. I had him under treatment for this six months, giving him several pounds of bromide of potassium. His mind grew weaker under this drug. He said to himself one day, "It seems that I can neither get well, die, nor go crazy, so I will quit squandering my money on doctor bills."

My complete failure to give satisfaction in this case, just when the threatening success of a competitor made it necessary to keep my reputation up to its full strength, was very trying. I knew Dr. Vertebra was making inroads into my business, but on learning that Mr. Jehu Verbosego was receiving treatment from him, my faith in humanity was woefully shaken. Was it possible that the very competitor who, on account of the unfavorable circumstances under which he located, seemed the least likely to be in my way, was drawing my best support? I thought, can anybody's friendship be relied on?

This incident had a peculiar effect on me. No other had taken such a hold on my mind. I was troubled with evil forebodings and went to bed that night with a congested brain. Sleep was out of the question. I could now sympathize with Mr. Verbosego. I resolved to have an understanding about this unfair treatment at the hands of my best friend. But it was a number of weeks before I could muster up the courage to approach Mr. Verbosego on the subject. In the meantime I watched his general appearance and was forced to admit that everything indicated improvement in his health. He was gaining flesh, looked brighter and was more cheerful.

Now, will I prove myself different from all other men when I say this was displeasing to me? Are there not others who are sometimes provoked at the happiness and prosperity of others when it seems to interfere with their own selfish interests?

Thinking it a good stroke of policy for Mr. Verbosego to be seen going into my office, I asked him to come up at a certain time. It would look as if he were renewing his loyalty to me.

"Well, Mr. Verbosego," I said, "how are you getting on under Mr. Vertebra's treatment?"

"I am doing first rate under *Dr. Vertebra's* treatment," he replied, emphasizing doctor, as if to show resentment at my failing to acknowledge the title.

"I could see very distinctly," I remarked, "that you were improving before you quit me; and you exercised poor judgment, besides violating a long-standing friendship, by going to that man for treatment."

He looked indignant and said, "You are very much mistaken, Doctor; instead of improving, I never felt more discouraged in my life than I did the day before I went to Dr. Vertebra, and that is the reason I went. I am sorry I didn't go sooner. I was desperate. His interpretation of my symptoms and the prompt results of his treatment convinces me that I did not exercise poor judgment by going to him."

These remarks disconcerted me; they changed my attitude and diverted me from my plan of deriding Mr. Verbosego into regrets for dropping me and employing a man without a reputation. I was totally at a loss to know what reply to make. Mr. Verbosego sat staring at me with the courage of a bull dog. Finally I ventured the question, "What did he say was the matter with you?"

"He said there was nothing the matter with my head, but you would have had a big hole cut in my skull to remove a tumor or something that never was there."

A disagreeable silence followed. Mr. Verbosego evidently was wondering what I would say, and I was wondering if I would ever be able to speak again. My head was throbbing. It felt as if there might be a great big tumor on my brain about ready to burst.



Mr. Verbosego resumed: "I haven't had any of those awful feelings in my head since the first week I was under Dr. Vertebra's care, and that terrible despondency has disappeared."

This news was very interesting to me, but my question had not been answered yet. I was anxious, and yet had a peculiar dread of the answer. It might expose my ignorance and stupidity. I was resolved not to enquire further as to Dr. Vertebra's diagnosis; it would be showing respect for his opinion. But my curiosity was gratified. Mr. Verbosego said, "Dr. Vertebra said the only trouble with me was indigestion, and the bad feelings in my head were only sympathetic. And I know he is right, to, for as soon as he gave me remedies to promote digestion, and put me on the proper diet, I had no more head symptoms."

This took my breath, my heart almost ceased to beat, and my vocal organs were paralyzed. Finally I rallied and said, "Why, didn't I tell you that you had indigestion?"

"No, you did not; but you said I had heart disease and several other ailments besides serious brain trouble."

This was the hardest blow I had received since becoming established in practice. Vanquished by the competitor that I had belittled more than any other!

There being no hopes of my getting further comfort out of Mr. Verbosego, I got rid of him as soon as possible, and at once set to work to devise some scheme for counteracting the misfortune, if not to turn it to my benefit as I had often done under similar circumstances.

The first thing I did was to read up on nervous indigestion and functional derangement of the liver; but turning to articles on those subjects in Pepper's System of Medicine, I found that they covered more pages than I cared to read; yet I was so anxious to know on what grounds Dr. Vertebra based his diagnosis, I conceived the idea of interviewing him on the subject. It would be easier work



than searching books. I was always willing enough to learn, provided I could take in knowledge by absorption—endosmosis, as medical students at college are wont to call it. One of my peculiarities—I admit in late years that I have some—one that has hindered the true development of my intellect, is the lazy and industrious spots in my brain. I never tire of listening and observing, but to get right down to digging through the pages of books always was distasteful to me. That part of my gray matter which searches literature and delves into profound, intricate facts is always tired. It is this feature of my economy that has never failed to provoke criticism of the few papers I have read in our County Medical Society, the members seeing at once that they were compilations, and that I was only reading the language as well as the thoughts of medical authors. Yet I venture the assertion that I got more financial benefit from my big library than the other members did from their smaller, more unpretentious ones. The great display of books made my patrons think I was learned.

Now, this interview with Dr. Vertebra must come by accident. It would not do for me to show enough interest or respect for his opinion to seek it openly. Fortune still seemed to favor me. I saw the doctor coming up the street, and accidentally (?) placing myself in my office door, began conversation as he approached. After a few remarks I invited him inside and incidentally brought up the subject of the influence of diseases of the liver and digestive apparatus on the mind. By a cunning series of questions I drew the doctor out at full length; but, while I was pleased to secure valuable information with so little work, I felt jealous of his superior knowledge on the subject. He explained in a very satisfactory manner that in certain types of stomach, liver and bowel troubles only very slight symptoms are detected in these organs themselves; the force of the lesion being spent in the brain, af-

fecting the memory, disposition and will power, producing troublesome despondency and hypochondriasis, frequently resulting in suicide, but scarcely ever insanity.

Dr. Vertebra had at this time been in Petville longer than any other physician had remained, besides myself, and I did not see any indication of his leaving; yet I felt that I must get rid of him. But what method should I employ was a perplexing question. I had thought the circumstances under which he came would make him easy prey. I had used his financial misfortunes, the report that he was only a druggist, his being a single man and the slanderous stories Jo Blaggar and Mr. Verbosego trumped up about his professional and social standing in Des Moines, for all they were worth. And there were other circumstances which I used, through my henchmen, to make Dr. Vertebra unpopular. He had ideas and opinions concerning local affairs, and they were generally good ones, but our little syndicate had formed an oligarchy as well as a monopoly, therefore, an expression from a new-comer, that was liable to influence the management of the social, political or business affairs of the town, was pronounced an attempt to "run the town," hence the new-comer was considered an undesirable citizen and must be boycotted. And as only a small portion of the community did any thinking for themselves, we had no trouble in creating prejudice against the victim of our selfishness. Dr. Vertebra was a positive character and had the courage of his convictions. His personality and selfhood were conspicuous. He believed that in this age of advanced thought, and also cupidity, thinking, assertive men are the ones that ought to be at the front. The present spirit of reform amidst growing selfishness, demands them. The doctor hesitated not to condemn any wrong and advocate reform; and as it is impossible for one to practice these principles without infringing on the alleged liberties of some, he made enemies. I took advantage of this, consid



erably to his injury. When he came to town a half-dozen families were running the town their own way. We were leaders; representative citizens. It was a great thing to be a representative citizen of a town of five hundred inhabitants.

Leaders? No, we were only bosses. We would allow persons outside of the syndicate to hold public offices and prominent places in the churches and lodges, but if they ever attempted to introduce anything new, we would go right after their scalps. They would be blacklisted and their office holding speedily brought to an end; and they were made to feel that they were living in the frigid zone.

Dr. Vertebra joined a certain organization, the membership of which was composed of both sexes, and in a few weeks he introduced a resolution to devote a part of the evening to a literary program; the resolution was adopted, even against some opposition, led by Mrs. Scatherblite, the wife of a syndicator. Dr. Vertebra, seeing the performances were wanting in system and energy, and that parliamentary rules were painfully disregarded, made a motion that a critic be appointed, stating what his duties should be; the motion was seconded by a Methodist preacher who had been in town only a few months. This was a bombshell in the camp! Those members who had been disciplined by the syndicate were horror struck. What an awful departure for Petville! As soon as the members recovered from the shock, Mrs. Scatherblite popped up and asked, "What does this mean? Does Dr. Vertebra propose to make a training school of this lodge? Are we folks that's been in Petville these twenty years goin' to let the newcomers tell us how to do things? Not much, so far as I'm concerned. We never have had such a thing and I guess we won't have."

Miss Jackson went by default, for the presiding officer would not put it to a vote. He evidently had been under the discipline of the syndicate.



Fogysim had been so instilled into the minds of the older settlers of Petville that some ludicrous incidents were recorded in its history. It must be understood, however, that those people were not allround fogies; this appellation fitted them only in regard to conducting public and semi-public affairs. They kept up with the times so far as their finances would permit, in matters of dress, furnishing their houses, etc.

It had been the custom in one of the churches for the congregation to stand during prayer, but a new pastor whom they had called, did not require it. This was an innovation they could not stand. Some of the dames and deacons exclaimed in holy horror, "Why, the idea of Presbyterians settin' in their seats while they pray!" This, with one or two other trifling changes in the church government, caused the pastor to seek another location at the end of his first year in Petville.

The son of one of the syndicate married a cultured young lady in another town, and he being the only child, it was convenient for him and his bride to live in the old homestead with his parents. Everything moved along harmoniously until one day the mother-in-law noticed that the cupboard had been moved to another corner of the kitchen. "What does this mean, Sarah?" she asked authoritatively. The good old lady's attitude and expression indicated that a serious crime had been discovered.

"Why, Mother," the daughter-in-law replied, "I had the cupboard moved over there because it would be so much nearer the dining room door and also the stove, thus saving many a step and a good deal of time during the preparation of meals."

"But that cupboard has been in that corner ever since it was brought into the house nine years ago, and it must go back there. It seems that everybody that comes to Petville wants to make some change in everything they be-

connected with. I wonder if they think we don't know anything? I hate this meddling disposition."

The daughter-in-law playfully related this circumstance to some women of the syndicate and of course it soon got back to the ears of the mother-in-law who became so indignant that a full-grown disturbance in the household followed, resulting in the young couple's providing a separate home for themselves.

This disposition of the old Petvillites to adhere to stereotyped methods in trifling matters was from force of habit, but as to affairs of more general importance there was a motive; the older settlers were ignorant, illiterate and inexperienced in everything but their own private affairs. In this, some of them, by keeping out competition, had been fairly successful. They were leaders in the business affairs and what little society there was in the community, and were resolved with one accord to hold this position, but they knew the only way they could succeed in this was to prevent newcomers from introducing innovations in any of the activities of life that would require more talent for their promotion than the old settlers possessed. This manifestation of jealousy caused a great deal of friction. The population was constantly changing, and as the newcomers became identified with the various interests of the place they would naturally present advanced ideas concerning their management; but just as sure as they did, a howl of disapproval would be raised by the syndicate and their followers. It was a serious crime for any one outside the syndicate to attempt to abolish any of the established customs of the old settlers; and the one who had the courage to dare such a thing was the subject of general gossip. Cries of "He's trying to run the town," "She thinks she's smart," would rend the air. These people were not opposed to progress *per se*, but their sentiments were guided by selfish motives. If you could have access to their true inwardness you might have read on the tablets



of their hearts, "If we allow these newcomers or any others not under the control of the syndicate, to establish new business concerns or introduce advanced ideas about the management of the affairs of the town, it will not be long till merit and ability will count for something in this community, and even be demanded in the government of the town, the churches, the schools and society; then where will we be? We will have to take a back seat, and no longer glory in our positions as merchant kings, grain magnates, metropolitan bankers, medical aristocrats, church monarchs, political dictators, and queens of society."

I was the originator of this anti-progress idea, and, for various reasons, was the most interested in keeping it up; principally because Dr. Vertebra was the most progressive, public spirited man in the town. He had been accustomed to better society and a more progressive atmosphere than he found at Petville. I saw soon after he had entered upon the duties of his profession and began to mingle in social relations with the people, that his policy was to depend on merit for his success. This pleased me, for experience and observation had grounded the idea into my head that in many kinds of business, merit was a secondary matter, and to depend on it in the practice of medicine warranted failure.

Dr. Vertebra said to some friends who were discussing the jealousy and opposition he had to contend with, "O, well, if I am competent to practice medicine, the citizens of Petville will find it out and give me a reasonable amount of patronage."

"But," said Mr. Long, "you must remember that Dr. Fussanfeathers has, for twenty years, been teaching these people that choosing a family physician is a question of silk hats, fine clothes, broad smiles, affected manners, dashing teams, office boys and drivers, stylish but fine bookcases with lots of books for people to look



pearing always to be rushed with business and a display of surgical instruments and apparatus."

"Yes, I admit," said the doctor, "that these things do blind people's judgment and cause them to act unwisely, but a wave of enlightenment has struck this country, and I trust that a portion of the community will open the portals of their understanding and let it carry in enough of common sense to cause them to choose a physician because of his merits instead of external appearances." And with a confidential smile and a toss of the head, he added, "I think it will not be long until my distinguished competitor's fuss will make the people tired, and his feathers will get ruffled."

"I hope," replied Mr. Long, "your prediction will be realized; but there is so much infirmity in human nature. People are often swayed by light influences while weightier ones will not move them. Dignity is another dependence of Dr. Fussanfeathers for fooling the people; but there is a species of dignity, which, when it occupies a man, there is nothing else in him. The astute observer notices that whenever Dr. Fussanfeathers is in a situation where a dignified bearing is expected, he talks very little and looks wise. It takes all his talents and energies to be dignified—he does nothing else. Should he attempt to discuss a profound subject or undertake to entertain, the effort would fall flat and he would only be rude and clownish. And the same may be said of his wife, only she hasn't sense enough to hold her tongue."

"Well," said Dr. Vertebra, "if I can't make a living and also lay up something for a rainy day, practicing medicine without making a great show and resorting to false appearances, I will go into some other business; yet I admit that our profession is one that does not stand altogether on its own merits. But I feel that if I should conduct my professional career in such a way as not to condemn and discountenance this feature of the profession, I would be

guilty of a crime against humanity and of virtually opposing advancement and reform."

When I heard of these remarks of Dr. Vertebra's, I immediately told my wife, knowing that she had, through my example, together with her long struggle to make a living with her smattering of music, learned the value of certain influences in making and breaking reputations. She went straightways to Mrs. Blaggar's, as I expected her to do. Mrs. Blaggar happened to be alone and at leisure. She received my wife with unusual cordiality. These two women were always sociable, yet had they yielded to the promptings of their hearts they would not have been on speaking terms. They were both ambitious to be social leaders, and each felt the need of the other's help in holding her prominence. So there was a tacit understanding that they would keep up a sort of social partnership; but, as is generally the case with uncongenial co-partnerships, this did not yield satisfactory profits. There was a good deal of friction. Their opportunities for becoming broadened by coming in contact with the world had been meager and their intellectual attainments were too limited to make them sure of themselves, and as a result the green-eyed monster often showed himself at the window of their hearts. They watched each other with a jealous eye. Mrs. Blaggar sang, and my wife played occasionally in public, and they were both very sensitive and greatly concerned as to the appreciation of their services. If any one wanted to invoke the enmity of one of these women he could easily do so by praising the performance of the other. Their cordial dislike for each other was well known and frequently furnished humorous gossip for the town. As the population increased, these women had to give way to better musical talent; but they undertook to compensate for their being forced out of musical circles by increasing their prominence as social leaders and helping their husbands make a success of their business. They had learned through their



husbands that sometimes an object may be obtained better by indirection, and this is why they directed their operations against Dr. Vertebra. This man was a thorn in the sides of all the members of our syndicate. He was progressive and we all had a secret feeling that progress in Petville meant disaster to monopoly. The friendship between Mrs. Blaggar and my wife was now less strained; they exchanged calls oftener.

"O, your new waist is done. Isn't it lovely?"

The garment lying on the table was the first thing that attracted my wife's attention on entering the Blaggar home.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Blaggar, "I just came from the dressmaker's with it."

"I suppose you'll wear it to the Vertebra banquet tomorrow night."

"Vertebra banquet! What do you mean?"

"Why, you know it is to be given by the Shakesperean Reading Club, and Dr. Vertebra runs the club."

"I knew," indignantly remarked Mrs. Blaggar, "that he organized it, but I should hate to admit that he was running it."

"Don't you think Dr. Vertebra is getting a little too active in a good many things around here for a person that's been here only three or four years?"

"Yes, I've thought so myself. It's just as Mr. Blaggar says. Dr. Vertebra is always getting up some kind of a scheme. I think he ought to be ignored by this community."

"Do you think he has much influence?" Mrs. Fussanfeathers asked.

"Some people seem to think he is all right," was the reply.

"Well," Mrs. Fussanfeathers commenced, "he's not the kind of a man we want here. The town could get along better without him. Supposing a number of others like



him—men and women—should come here; they'd upset everything. It wouldn't be long till they'd have a lot of literary societies, lodges and women's clubs for people to fool away their time with. Everything would be changed. But we don't want strangers to come in here and interfere with the way we've been doing things for twenty years."

"I quite agree with you, Mrs. Fussanfeathers; I think the town ought to boycott Dr. Vertebra. He's always talking about improving the schools, churches, etc., and building up the town, but just as sure as the town grows, the newcomers will think they are smarter and better educated than we are, and want to make changes and run things to suit themselves and then the old settlers won't make as much money nor have as good times as they do now. I believe in letting well enough alone."

"Yes, you are right, Mrs. Blaggar; what do us old settlers care for better schools and churches and a larger town, if it's going to upset our plans?"

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### CAUGHT AGAIN.

After learning the circumstances and conditions under which Dr. Vertebra located in Petville I said to myself, "I will dispose of him as easily as a full grown cur would a crippled poodle. I felt sure that a little well planned opposition from the syndicate would soon drive him, who was already crushed by misfortune, into despair; but a greater mistake in estimating a man's character could hardly be made.

I had intended after he should fail, to make a joke of the matter by suggesting that "my late competitor's character belies his name," but instead, I finally was compelled to admit that the sturdy backbone Dr. Vertebra exhibited completely proved the appropriateness of his name. Since the syndicate have seen him stand up so firmly against their continuous vituperations and slander and deep laid plans to ruin him, they have never been known to quote the adage, "What's in a name?"

Dr. Vertebra caused me more worry and inconvenience than all previous competitors combined. He was the only one that exposed my peculiar methods for gaining reputation and practice. I predicted that his disposition, theories and principle of action alone would cause his failure. He was a sincere man and believed that all the affairs of life should stand on their merits. He had no patients with business tact that carried with it misrepresentation, and was free to condemn fraud and insincerity wherever it might appear, in business, society, religion or politics. This, of course, made him unpopular with a certain class; there are many who place success in business above all vir-

tues, and often wink at transactions which are flagrant violations of the moral code.

Dr. Vertebra pursued a policy, which, from a strictly business standpoint, was not in accord with good sense; yet I admit now, in maturer years, when most of my life is behind me, and I am more capable of weighing and estimating worldly glory, that it was nearer in line with right and justice than it would have been had he shaped it more to the liking of those who found fault with it.

Dr. Vertebra was not a man who allowed others to think for him, yet he was always willing to endorse the ideas, even of enemies, if reason seemed to justify him. This is why he often came into conflict with our syndicate and their followers. These people assumed the right to mould the sentiments of the community; but what made this circumstance the more intolerable to the doctor was that he thought this position should have been occupied by persons of a different standard of intelligence and morality. He did not believe mere money-getters should be the custodians of a community's morals and actions. His most humiliating exposure of my methods was when I undertook to put a great big feather in my cap by stating that I had been appointed on the committee to examine the graduating class at the Medical Department of the State University. This was to be a master stroke in the way of gaining prominence. I congratulated myself on the shrewdness of my plans. I had made arrangements to kill two large birds with one stone. John Camp, who lived on the edge of my territory, having died of a doubtful ailment, Dr. Boneset, of an adjoining town, who attended him in his last days, secured permission to make an autopsy, and Dr. Sycophant was to assist him. Inasmuch as I was one of the physicians who treated this man during the sickness that ended in his death, I resolved that there must be good excuse for my not conducting the postmortem, even if I had to manufacture one myself. So I sent word to a patient in the



neighborhood, to whom I was making daily visits, that I was going to Iowa City to examine the medical graduates of the State University, therefore would not be able to see her for two days, and that for the same reason I would not be at the post-mortem of Mr. Camp. When the plan was consummated I was elated over my success in advertising my professional prominence besides avoiding the stigma of not having a hand in so important a matter as an autopsy in my legitimate territory. I was repeatedly congratulated on the streets over the recognition and honor I had received at the hands of the Governor of the State, but when Dr. Vertebra called the attention of my neighbors to a statement published six days later in the Des Moines papers that "The examination of the graduates of the Medical Department of the State University would take place in a week," and also furnished proof that the register of the Kirkwood House showed that I was in Des Moines during the two days that I was supposed to have gone to Iowa City, the wind was all knocked out of my sails.

## CHAPTER XL.

### TWO OPINIONS.

"Doc, that was a bad run-away out at Dan Brock's this morning."

"Why, what was the result?" I asked, admitting that I was not up with the news.

"They were just starting to town when Mrs. Brock raised her parasol, which frightened the horses and they started to run, the buggy tongue dropped and stuck in the ground; this raised the buggy in the air, throwing the occupants out hard. Dan had a leg broken and received several bruises; Mrs. Brock's wrist was dislocated, and she got a cut on her head and some other injuries. The team plunged off the bridge this side of Ransom's and one of the horses was killed."

I began to wonder and surmise. Had I missed another important case?

"How did you hear this?" I asked.

"Dr. Vertebra just came in from there. He says Mrs. Brock may be seriously injured internally, but he is not certain."

I was very much concerned about this news, but it did not interest me in the way it did the friends and sympathizers of these unfortunate people. I could not relish the idea of two prominent citizens requiring the prompt services of a physician on account of an exciting accident that would attract the attention of the entire neighborhood—and I have nothing to do with it. Owing to the comparative estimates I had put on my ability and that of Dr. Vertebra, and my rights and his, I considered that an unpardonable injustice had been done me. It was humiliating.

The disposition I had cultivated made it easy for me to view the matter in this way. I had allowed self-aggrandizement and covetousness to transcend justice and merit so long that a film had grown so opaque over my mental and moral eye-sight that I was not able to see the rights of a competitor. It was about this time in my life that I began to realize the tyrannical character of the green-eyed monster. He delights in tormenting his victims. I would willingly have turned him away, but he haunted me till I found myself planning to give him a sumptuous entertainment. I was always good on plans. A few hours after the news of this accident reached my ears, my good old friend, Mrs. Plotter, responded to an invitation to call at my office.

"I suppose you have heard of Mr. and Mrs. Brock's misfortune?" she asked, while I was thinking up some way to introduce the subject without creating the impression that this was the object of my invitation.

I admitted that I had received the news.

"I wonder why they didn't call you out," was her next remark. I was gratified to see Mrs. Plotter manifest some interest in the affair.

"It is not unlikely that I shall be called yet." This was a rather bold assertion, for there was no probability of my being connected with the case; but my friend's further remarks opened the way for a proposition.

"The injury of those people may be much more serious than they are aware of."

"Yes, that's so," said Mrs. Plotter.

"I wonder" said I, "if they know that Dr. Vertebra has not had much experience in cases of that kind, and that his record so far is very bad?"

I made an effort to accompany my remarks with facial expression that would show Mrs. Plotter there was something more to be understood; and it was evident that she



was thinking beyond my words. We had long been accustomed to study one another's meaning.

"They ought to know these things," I further remarked, keeping my eye on Mrs. Plotter.

"They have always employed you, haven't they? What made them drop you?"

This was one among many similar questions that puzzled my brain. A number of the most intelligent, thinking people of the neighborhood had, within the past year, transferred their patronage from me to Dr. Vertebra, and I could not discuss the question without considerable displeasure. It was noticeable that his gains were mostly among the more independent class; those who thought they could live and prosper without truckling to popular sentiment.

"It would be too bad," I said, "if Mrs. Brock should lose her life through the incompetency of her physician; or if Mr. Brock should be a cripple for life on account of his leg not being set right."

"Indeed it would," Mrs. Plotter said.

"You are pretty well acquainted with the family, aren't you, Mrs. Plotter?"

"O, yes, we are good friends."

"Then, of course, you are concerned about their welfare?"

"Certainly I am."

"So am I. Mr. and Mrs. Brock always commanded my admiration. I would do anything I could for them."

"Even now, I suppose, after their strange treatment of you in this instance."

"That would not make any difference. Wouldn't you like to go out and see them, Mrs. Plotter? I know they would be pleased to see you."

This question was not so readily answered as the others. Mrs. Plotter gave me a searching look.

"Nothing would please me better than to go out."

We still kept our eyes on each other, and I somehow read in her countenance, "I'll go provided you defray the expenses."

I was rewarded with the satisfaction of proving a good mind reader, for my friend was delighted when I offered to pay for a livery rig to carry her out three miles on a mission of mercy. And I was confident that previous training had qualified her to fulfill the mission satisfactorily to me at least. I advised her to go in the afternoon, for I knew there were likely to be more of the neighbors in at that time, especially women.

"You know," said I, with as much meaning in my face as in my words, "that a cut or bruise on the scalp is very likely to result in erysipelas unless it is treated just right."

"Why, Mrs. Brock, I'm surprised to see you sitting up. Aren't you running considerable risk in doing so?"

The victim of the run-away was sitting in an easy chair, reading a book when Mrs. Plotter entered the room.

"I don't know why I should be in bed," was the reply, and, glancing round the door cheek, Mrs. Plotter added,

"And there's Mr. Brock hobbling about on crutches—your people must have lots of grit."

"O, I'm as good as half a dozen dead men, yet, Mrs. Plotter," said the man with the fractured leg, as he swung two hundred pounds avoirdupois through the partition door.

"That was a bad scrape you got into, wasn't it?" said Mrs. Plotter.

"Yes, we had a little more fun than we bargained for on that trip."

"You have a strange idea of fun," said matter-of-fact Mrs. Brock.

"What injuries did you sustain, Mrs. Brock, besides those of the wrist and scalp?"

After securing an enumeration of the wounds of both victims and the details of the accident, Mrs. Plotter began,



"I was shocked when I heard of this, and couldn't rest till I came out to see you. Are you sure that you are not worse hurt than appearances now indicate?"

"I guess not," Mr. Brock replied. "Dr. Vertebra made a careful examination and seemed to comprehend the condition of things."

Mrs. Plotter assumed an air of serious meditation, and after prolonged silence, resumed,

"Now, I would be the last person to meddle with other people's affairs, but kindly to make a suggestion in the interest of a friend is not meddling; and if I were in your place I wouldn't be satisfied till I had more medical advice."

"Well," replied Mr. Brock, "I'm sure we would seek further advice if we thought it necessary."

"But I wouldn't consider myself capable of judging in a matter of this kind."

"We have not depended on our own judgment; we called a doctor at once."

"Yes, I know you did, and I have nothing to say against Dr. Vertebra. He's all right in some cases, but you know, Mrs. Brock, that was an awful hard fall you got, and you may be seriously injured internally, and a counsel of physicians might reveal something that nobody has dreamed of and it might be the means of saving your life. I've known more than one case of the kind. Even if there's nothing wrong, it's always best to err on the safe side."

"Then you haven't much confidence in Dr. Vertebra?"

"O, yes, I have; I don't want you to think I would say or do anything to hurt him at all. I would let every one have his own preference as to physicians; but you know two heads are better than one."

"What doctor would you suggest for counsel?" Mr. Brock asked.

"I don't want to dictate to you, but if I should choose one for myself it would be Dr. Fussanfeathers, by all



means; especially in a surgical case. I think there's no other in the county to compare with him. He has had so much experience and has attended medical college so much that what he don't know in the medical line there's no use for anybody else to try to learn."

Mrs. Plotter knew, and so did the Brocks know that if I should be called there would be no consultation, for it was universally known that I would not associate with Dr. Vertebra in a professional capacity. Mrs. Plotter added, "Now, I hope Dr. Fussanfeathers will never know that I interceded for him. He wouldn't thank me, for he has always been very careful never to say a word or do anything against Dr. Vertebra."

With the assistance of two neighbor women, who were staunch friends of mine, Mrs. Plotter prevailed on the invalids to call me out to see them. I had cause for rejoicing, for this issue of the affair was better for me and more damaging to Dr. Vertebra than if I had been called in the first place. Mrs. Plotter was made the messenger in the affair, and when she announced the victory I gave her a receipt for seven dollars, the amount of her indebtedness to me, and considered it a good investment.

On entering the Brock residence I was pleased to find four neighbor women and one man there, all friends of mine. The patients were somewhat uneasy and anxious to see me. Mrs. Plotter's visit had created misgivings. I found Mrs. Brock's wrist neatly dressed in splints and bandages, which I at once removed; and after an examination that caused her to scream with pain, I shook my head and assumed an air of superior wisdom. I hesitated and tried to look as if I were compelled to make a disagreeable statement. Finally I said, in a serious tone, "I judge from the dressing that this was diagnosed and treated merely as a dislocation."

"Yes," said Mrs. Brock, that is what Dr. Vertebra called it."

After a pause, I said, "I'm sorry to have to inform you, Mrs. Brock, that you have sustained a comminuted complicated fracture of the radius and ulna."

"That's just what I thought," said Mrs. Goster.

"Yes," added Mrs. Bluster, "don't you remember that I asked Dr. Vertebra if he was sure there was no bones broken."

"It does seem," said Mrs. Brock, "that I have suffered more pain than was necessary for simply a dislocation. I'm disappointed in Dr. Vertebra. I supposed he understood his business."

"It is unfortunate," I remarked, "because the bones will be much harder to set now than they would have been in the first place, for the swelling has pushed them further out of place."

Mrs. Brock looked sad. "O, my!" she exclaimed, "Isn't it dreadful!"

"Don't worry, Mrs. Brock," I said, "I'll anesthetize you so you will not feel any pain, and fix your wrist up all right."

I put Mrs. Brock under the influence of chloroform and went through the motion of setting broken bones. I then dressed the cut on her head quite differently from the way Dr. Vertebra had dressed it.

On looking at Mr. Brock's fractured leg, which was carefully and properly dressed in a plaster-of-Paris bandage I turned my face to the bystanders so they might see it was mounted with a smile of surprise and disapproval. Then I said, "The doctor certainly could not find anything else, or he wouldn't have dressed this leg in a plaster-of-Paris bandage. If this bandage should remain on a day or two longer, gangrene and blood poison would set in."

"But," said Mr. Brock, "the doctor said he would watch it and if the swelling seemed to make it too tight he would remove it and put on a looser one."



"It isn't likely," I replied, "that he would have discovered his mistake until it was too late to save the leg."

I removed the bandage and as a justification of my disapproval, applied an old-fashioned wooden splint.

While attending to Mrs. Brock a happy thought struck me. I stated that the use of anaesthetic revealed symptoms which confirmed my opinion that she was seriously injured internally. The spectators showed that they were struck with awe at my wonderful sagacity and wisdom. That was just the way I wanted to strike them.

One woman said, "Why didn't Dr. Vertebra discover this? He put her under the influence of chloroform, too."

Before I got through with my patients, three other women came in, two of whom were patrons of Dr. Vertebra, but being in the minority and somewhat modest, they kept quiet during the discussion of the comparative merits of Dr. Vertebra and myself; but they looked daggers at my admirers who heaped calumny on the head of my competitor.

I remained an hour after my services were completed, under the pretense of making scientific observations as Mrs. Brock recovered from the effects of the anesthetic, claiming thus to be able to make an accurate diagnosis of her internal injuries. I intended this remarkable example of profound wisdom to mystify the people around me, as well as to widen the contrast between my ability and that of Dr. Vertebra. There is a peculiar trait in man that makes mystery attractive to him. The less people understand about a thing the more reverence and respect they have for it. This is the reason that the shrewd, designing physician—the successful one from a financial standpoint—is careful about imparting information to his clients.

But time did not drag. I got considerable entertainment and amusement, during the hour, out of the conversation of those seven women. The talkers were generally in an adjoining room, but the partition door being open, I



distinctly heard what they said. They went on apparently unconscious of any presence except their own.

"Did Dr. Vertebra ever doctor you?"

"Yes, but I don't like his medicine. I think, hereafter, when we can't get Dr. Fussanfeathers we'll have Dr. Sycophantool."

"O, I think Dr. Vertebra gives better medicine than Dr. Sycophantool does."

"Do you think so? I wouldn't have him doctor a cat for me?"

"They say Dr. Sycophantool eats morphine."

"I heard so, too."

"Some say Dr. Vertebra is good for children."

"That may be, but he's no good in fevers—say, do you know he gave Mrs. Henderson the wrong medicine?"

"Is that so?"

"Yes, he gave her stomach medicine when he ought to have given her liver medicine. They called him because Dr. Fussanfeathers was gone to Des Moines, and when Dr. Fussanfeathers came back he went out and when he looked at the medicine Dr. Vertebra left he said it was the wrong medicine."

"And I've known Dr. Fussanfeathers to give the wrong medicine, too."

If those women's ideas as to the accuracy with which the medical man is able to select remedies for his cases were justified, the troubles and perplexities of the profession and the sufferings of humanity would be wonderfully diminished. The conversation went on:

"There's a lot of difference in doctors."

"I heard Mrs. Williams is getting well."

"Yes, she was out to church Sunday, but she hadn't been before for over a year."

"She looks pretty well, too. I tell you, if Dr. Fussanfeathers can't bring a person out no doctor can."

"But Dr. Vertebra has been treating her for the last month or so."

This was said by a friend of Dr. Vertebra's, with a smile of satisfaction, and the woman who had praised Dr. Fuss-anfeathers quickly changed the subject by asking,

"Have you set any hens yet, Mrs. Jones?"

"No, I'm not in any hurry; we'll have some cold weather yet," said Mrs. Jones.

"I thought I'd try some Leghorns this summer. Mrs. Kelley's promised me a setting of eggs."

"How do you break hens of wanting to set?"

"That's what I'd like to know. I had the awfulest time last spring. It seemed that all my hens wanted to go to settin' just when eggs were the highest price."

"I had trouble with mine, too, but it was because they all wanted to set in the same nest."

"The best way I know of is to tie them to a tree or something for two or three days where there's no grass or weeds."

"O, that won't work. I've kept hens tied a week, and just as soon as they were turned loose they'd hike right back on the nest and set for three weeks if you'd let 'em."

"I've heard it said that immersing a hen in a tub of cold water will break her of setting."

"Mrs. Story, what is your plan? Or have you any?"

"Yes," answered Mrs. Story, "I have a plan that never fails; but I'm too much of a Quaker to believe in immersion, or even sprinkling; nor would I be so cruel as to keep an enterprising fowl that wanted to raise a family tied to a tree a week."

After a pause, a woman asked, "What is your plan?"

"It is to take a cloth of bright colors—silk is the best—cut a hole in the center and one on either side, put the hen's head through the middle hole and her wings through those on the sides; the cloth should be large enough to extend

along the back to the tail and nearly down to the feet in front. Do this, ladies, and your hens will quit setting."

A short silence.

"Why will that make a hen quit setting?"

"I'm not sure that I know. My husband says it is because she would rather be out in company showing her new clothes than raising a family."

The women did not know whether to take Mrs. Story seriously or not. There was nothing in her expression to guide them.

"Easter comes early this spring, doesn't it?"

"Yes, and I'm sorry for it."

"Why so? It's the sign of an early spring, and that's what we want."

"Yes, I know, but it isn't nice to have to get your Easter hat in cold weather."

"I saw in the paper that the styles won't be changed much this year."

"I'm glad of that, for I got such an expensive one last year. It's a pretty fussy one, too—got lots of flowers and ribbons—so I'll take off some of the trimmings and wear it another year."

"O, say! Have you seen Mrs Canby's new dress?"

"Yes. Isn't it a stunner, though? The idea of trimming black satin in pea green."

"She said she bought that dress with the butter she made from one cow in a year."

"How many cows do you milk, Mrs. Stoner?"

"Only four now, but we have two more that will be fresh in three weeks."

"We're goin' to get a couple of Jerseys this spring."

"What's the best thing to feed hens to make them lay?"

"I think wheat is."

"I read in the Homestead that there is nothing equal to fish to make hens lay."

"I think the best thing is to mix a little sulphur with



their food. It makes them lay good, and then it prevents 'em from having lice."

"Mrs. Story, what do you think about it? Have you as good a receipt for making hens lay as you have for preventing them from setting?"

"Yes, I think I have—better, even."

"What is it?"

"It is not altogether new, but it proved quite successful with one of my neighbor's hens to whom I gave it some time ago. I told her to give her hens cayenne pepper for supper; she did so—very liberally—and reported that the next morning before breakfast her hens all lay under the roost."

While Mrs. Brock was under the influence of the anesthetic I went through a process of palpation, percussion and auscultation of the abdomen and chest, and after she awoke, I stated in a very positive manner that there was a condition of interstitial hyepræmin of the subperitoneal areolar tissue, caused by contusion of the abdominal viscera, and I found the heart protruding through the diaphragm and impigning on the omentum, but I pushed it back in place. This ought to have been done yesterday. I'll leave some medicine here to dissipate that hyperæmin."

"There now," said a woman who was listening from another room, "that's the kind of a doctor to have; one that knows something. His explanation seems very reasonable."

"Isn't it wonderful," said another, "how Dr. Fussanfeathers can see through a person?"

"Now," said I, "I think you'll both pull through all right if you follow my directions, but if Mrs. Brock had not received proper treatment today, that diaphragmatic hernia would have produced cardiac strangury and the areolar hyperæmia would have resulted in diffusive peritonitis, and death would have been the result."

"I should think it would," promptly exclaimed the woman who put silk gowns on her setting hens.

On taking my leave I told them I would call again on the morrow, and I did. I called every day for two weeks, and made a bill of sixty dollars, which was paid without a word of protest; but they refused to pay Dr. Vertebra, and would have sued him for malpractice had I not advised them to pay his bill and drop the matter. I was afraid a lawsuit would bring out the facts, which would have been very embarrassing to me.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### DR. VERTEBRA CALLED TO DES MOINES.

On the day following my victory at Mr. Brock's, while I was speculating on the advantages it would be to me, I received a severe shock that I feared would neutralize the effects of that victory. I was sitting in the village drug store when a wealthy, influential farmer entered the store and said, "Do any of you gentlemen know where Dr. Vertebra is? His slate says he is out of town, but it doesn't say when he may be expected back."

The telegraph operator, who happened to be present, said, "I hope I will not be betraying my trust, if I tell you that he went to Des Moines in a response to a telegram from Albert Bruce, asking him to come down to see a sick child of his."

Only the very jealous hearted person who has had similar experience can appreciate the depth of my mortification and my disgust with humanity on learning that my detested competitor had been called to Des Moines on professional business by one of the most prominent lawyers of the city. And when the farmer, who had been an admirer of mine, added, "I wanted him to go out to see my wife; she's quite sick," I experienced no relief.

The next utterance of the farmer reminded me of the adage "Misfortunes never come singly."

I was just on the point of stepping out where he could see me, hoping that I would be substituted for Dr. Vertebra, when some one suggested, "Dr. Fussanfeathers is in town; you might get him."



"No, I don't want him. We've had enough of his fuss and feathers, and we want some good, honest medical skill," was the scathing reply.

Little Melbourne Bruce had been suffering from an attack of scarlet fever about a week. He was three years old, the fourth and youngest child in the family.

Dr. Vertebra reduced the fever and made the throat more comfortable in a few hours, and inspired the parents with strong faith in a favorable issue of the case. He refused, however, to begin his services until Dr. Myers, the attending physician, had been notified. This was a rule of ethics he never violated, even with me.

"Dr. Vertebra," said Mrs. Bruce, "we called you on account of the unusual success we understood you had when in Des Moines, with cases of this kind, and also your reputation in the treatment of children generally; and we trust that subsequent experience has not detracted from your skill."

"I thank you for the compliment, and hope you will not be disappointed."

"We have a good deal of confidence in Dr. Myers, but he doesn't seem to understand this case."

"Dr. Vertebra," said Mr. Bruce, "we have often wondered why you left Des Moines."

"Well, Mr. Bruce, all I have to say is, I do not know. It is the great mystery of my life. But there is a feeling within me—and it grows stronger as the years go by—that somehow, in some way, it will finally be known."

The doctor accepted an invitation to spend the night at the Bruce home. There was a double object in this invitation: sociability, and the benefit the doctor's presence might be to the sick child. The Bruces and Dr. Vertebra had learned long ago that they were congenial companions. Their associations together were always mutually entertaining and instructive. The conversation passed briefly



all their influence and tact to defeat him. They did so because of his record as an opponent of class legislation. Such influences more than once thwarted his political aspirations contrary to the wishes of a large majority of the masses.

Dr. Vertebra complimented his friend on the philosophical view he took of his defeat, and added, "I trust that in due time you will be brought out as a candidate for high honors when the question will be decided by the suffrages of the people. Then in all probability, the result will be different."

"But," said Mr. Bruce, "the trouble is in the fact that when the people exercise their suffrage at state and national elections, the candidate is lost sight of in the principles and public policies that make up the issue; the candidate having been selected in the conventions by a comparatively small number of voters, and not always in accordance with the will of the masses. The only way to remedy the matter under our present system is for the people to make the man as well as the policy the issue when electing delegates to the conventions. But the people are seldom allowed to select their public servants. They simply choose between ambitious men who force themselves on to the voters as candidates for office. Public sentiment should hold it a disgrace for a man to come out and say, 'Here, I am the proper man for this or that office. Elect me I am well qualified to fill it. I deserve your favors.'

So long as the voters allow themselves to be controlled by selfish, designing bosses in public affairs, where all have equal rights, they are not worthy the name of citizen in the broader sense of the term. They are slaves. But this condition will exist until greater independence of thought is attained, which attainment is possible only through a higher standard of intellectuality."

"The business of politics," said Dr. Vertebra, "must be very perplexing and hard on the nervous system."



"That depends on one's temperament and his ability to adapt himself to circumstances. However, I never intended to make a business of politics. The law is my vocation. How is it with your profession, Doctor? I have been in close enough touch with it to make me believe there are experiences connected with it that are calculated to test every virtue in the soul."

"Yes, we have some very trying experiences—that is, if we have a respectable degree of conscience. We, as well as lawyers, are often tempted to lay aside conscience."

"Yes, I know you are, and I am inclined to think it is harder for a doctor to resist his peculiar temptations than it is for the lawyer."

"I hope you are not aiming to distinguish between the integrity of the two professions."

"O, no; not at all. But we must admit that human nature is the same everywhere; the doctor and the lawyer have an equal desire to make a success of their business, and sometimes illegitimate acts—'tricks of the trade'—promise success, but owing to the occult nature of his profession, the doctor is not so apt to get caught in his tricks as the lawyer is, and the most optimistic philanthropist would admit that the fear of detection is a powerful preventive of transgression."

"There is too much truth in your remarks, Mr. Bruce."

"I am inclined to think, Doctor, that you have been particularly envired by these temptations, and if you have not yielded to a considerable extent, you have been a hero, and deserve special commendation."

"I admit there are some grounds for your presumption, but as to the effect the circumstances have had on my actions, I will leave that to my neighbors."

"There is just where I got my impression; and the neighbor who has enlightened me most is your competitor. Not by his words, but by inferences drawn from his actions and appearances, and his character. I have known

Dr. Fussanfeathers from childhood, and his success—as success goes with the world—is not a surprise, for he attained his success through shrewd, deep laid schemes generally stamped with features not in accord with the moral code and professional ethics. His professional career and his treatment of competitors are in harmony with his boyhood life. When a boy he could do the meanest things, and yet make the fewest open enemies of any boy in Jamburg, Pennsylvania.”

“Then I suppose the point you are aiming at is that a man’s success obtained by illegitimate means is liable to tempt his neighbors to try the same methods?”

“Yes, that is the point.”

“Well,” said Dr. Vertebra, “while I do not aim to arrogate to myself unusual virtue, I will say that I have no desire for that kind of success. Speaking of temptations, I meet a good many in my practice, but they come along a different line from what you have had reference to. For instance, only yesterday I was tempted to offer a severe rebuke to a woman where I was rendering services to another woman who had met with a misfortune that placed her in a precarious condition. Her mind and nerves were in a hypersensitive state.

‘She’s very dangerous, isn’t she, Doctor?’ said the visiting woman. The room was full of women who had come to ‘visit the sick,’ although I had left orders the day before not to admit visitors. My mind and sense of justice and common sense were in a hypersensitive state about this time, too; yet I summoned enough self-control to resist the temptation to say to this particular visitor, ‘No, ma’am, she isn’t nearly so dangerous as your presence and your thoughtless, imprudent remarks.’

The physician’s forbearance is often tested to the uttermost. He knows that in a large majority of cases where people visit a sick room they are led by curiosity instead of friendship. And in many cases they go with sinister mo-



tives, hoping to find an excuse for criticizing the attending physician's management of the case, simply because he happens not to be their favorite doctor. Nothing is more disagreeable to a conscientious physician than to attend a patient who is surrounded by persons who watch his every act with a critical eye, ready to find fault and compare him with some other physician. The physician also knows when this condition exists, though nothing in plain words may be said to this effect. The surrounding atmosphere conveys the impression to his mind. He cannot be mistaken. If the patient and his friends expect the attending physician to do his best and render efficient services, they should have none of his enemies or critics about the house.

No member of the profession ever had a better opportunity for realizing these facts than I have since locating in Petville. Dr. Fussanfeathers, my competitor, always has a number of men and women trained—some of them unconsciously—to say everything they can think of in his favor and do all in their power against his competitors. They are so well trained that when he says 'sic' even in a low whisper, or by a sign, they bark. The habit has become so persistent that these people are called 'Fussanfeather hounds' by the fair minded class. For a number of years after I located there when I would start out to visit a patient one or more of these hounds would scent my trail and follow it to the sick room and set up a howl that could be heard all over the neighborhood. It was extremely embarrassing to me; the more so on account of certain disasters that had nearly crushed the spirit all out of me; and feeling the torturing sting of my misfortune and hearing the barking of these cowardly, blood thirsty hounds, it was impossible for me to make a good appearance in a professional capacity. Dr. Fussanfeathers took advantage of these circumstances and constantly threw sand in my wounds."

"And still you remained there and surmounted those ob-



stacles. The bumps of hope and combativeness must be large on your head."

"But I admit that my courage did reel occasionally, and I sometimes wondered what would be the outcome. But there was all the time something within me that said, 'Stand up; be faithful; there is a providence back of this avalanche of grief.'"

"If the hand of providence were recognized oftener in things we call misfortune there would be less suffering and more happiness in the world. The human race is the author of its own misery. But we are recovering from the diseased condition to which ignorance has brought us."

"I see, Mr. Bruce, that you still attribute all our troubles to ignorance; and the more I study the question, the more I come to your theory."

"The more we study any question the nearer we approach the truth. This world was made an Eden, and it will be such again, but only through enlightenment. The weakest point in our present educational system is its failure to teach the true purpose of education. What is it that usually stimulates a man to obtain a diploma from a college? Is it not a desire to be better able to gain wealth, honor and influence to be used for selfish ends?"

"That certainly is the ultimate object in a large majority of cases," was the doctor's reply.

Mr. Bruce resumed: "Education that looks no farther than this is false, blind. If it were not blind it would see that such a course would not pay. A man cannot afford to spend half his life learning how to obtain something that is of short duration and uncertain in its results. Virtue is the only thing that is constant and sure of its reward.

"I would not have you misconstrue my words; a sincere desire for honor is commendable, influence is necessary and wealth brings grand opportunities and is indispensable to the consummation of noble undertakings, but

wealth, as it is ordinarily viewed, is not an element of virtue. The true purpose of education, according to my interpretation of Divine revelation—and this is our principal means of understanding ourselves—is to develop us into the image and likeness of our Creator; and His attributes are knowledge, truth and love.”

“Then,” interrupted the doctor, “according to your theory, when the race is thoroughly and truly educated it will be free from crime and sin.”

“That is the idea—but then it would be extravagant to hope for perfection.”

“Beautiful theory,” said the doctor, “and I don’t know that I have the assurance to question its validity.”

“This condition of the world is approaching more rapidly than we are aware of. Signs of it are apparent on all sides. The reason the world’s advancement is not admitted and appreciated more, is because complaints and comments concerning existing crime and wickedness are not diminishing. But this only shows a healthier and more acute state of the world’s conscience. Conduct that is now considered absolutely disgraceful and intolerable, was hardly condemned by society a generation ago. You and I remember when orthodox Christian denominations promoted lotteries in their churches. They do not do it now; a hundred years ago there were no thoughts of making a criminal comfortable in his cell; before my grandchildren are as old as I am, selling tobacco will be as disreputable as keeping a gambling house is now.”

During this conversation Miss Elbridge was seen coming across the street. As she entered the sick room she said, “Melbourne, you’ll get well now. Doctor Vertebra will cure you. He’s a good doctor.”

“Dr. Myers is a good doctor, too; but he didn’t understand my case,” the child promptly replied.

Miss Elbridge and the boy’s mother laughed; Mrs. Bruce suspended sanitary rules and kissed her boy.



"O, Melbourne," said Miss Elbridge, "I beg your pardon; I did not intend any insinuations against your doctor."

"I forgive you," said Melbourne, with a smile.

Miss Elbridge stepped into the sitting room. "Dr. Vertebra," she said, "I trust you will not consider me unpardonably reckless and imprudent; it was only a strong desire to see my little friend—and you, too—that tempted me to violate the quarantine rules; but I assure you that I will obviate all danger by changing my clothes in an out-house and washing myself in an anti-septic water—by the way, gentlemen, this probably is sufficient apology for my garb."

She had on a plain wrapper that had seen service, and nothing on her head. If anyone ever suspicioned that Miss Elbridge's charms and attractiveness depended upon rich, tasteful clothing, her appearance on this occasion would have dispelled this idea. She was not one of those women who had to be "made up" in order to look well, nor did she appear over-conscious or ill at ease in the finest attire.

"Now, gentlemen, resume your discussion," she said; "I know it is interesting. Two bright, congenial spirits never make dull conversation; I would not interrupt you; good evening."

"Don't hasten away, Miss Elbridge," said Mr. Bruce, "we would be pleased to have you join in the discussion."

"Thank you, but I must not tarry. Then what could I say about ethnology, anthropology, philology and other gigantic 'ologies? For some of these evidently is your topic."

A chorus of laughter, in which Mrs. Bruce joined, rang through the halls. Miss Elbridge glided gracefully to the door and disappeared.

"If there were more women," said Dr. Vertebra, "as pure in heart, clear in mind and healthy in body as that one is, the task of reforming and advancing the world would be much easier."



"I am pleased," replied Mr. Bruce, "that you recognize woman as an important factor in the progress of the world."

"No amount of prejudice or argument could induce me to do otherwise so long as observation teaches me that practically all the men who have become conspicuous through extraordinary ability had mothers with superior strength of mind and body, though not always blessed with much mental culture. What do you think, Mr. Bruce, of the new woman movement?"

"The movement is all right, but the term is a misnomer; as well say the new man, because the term is the result, simply, of an advanced idea concerning social, business and political relations of the sexes, and the male portion of the race has as much to do with promoting the idea as the female portion. I think 'new family' would be a more appropriate term, for the whole race is being regenerated and it is approaching a stage when its progress from one generation to another will be much more noticeable than it ever has been in the past."

"I am willing," said the doctor, "to take an optimistic view of the question, but there is a great deal of sin and corruption to get rid of before the world can be a paradise—"

"Disease, disease, you mean. Healthy bodies and healthy minds make healthy lives. The revolution which you know better than I do, is taking place in the medical world will give us healthy bodies, and this together with other influences, will give us healthy minds and morals; then we will understand ourselves, which will put the world at peace and make life worth living."

"The revolution of medicine has, in recent years, engaged my attention more, perhaps, than any other, but you spoke of other influences?"

"I had reference," said Mr. Bruce, "to marriage reform."

"Yes, we have often discussed that question before, and

I believe my sentiments harmonize with yours. I am inclined to think that when a person marries another with a diseased body or mind, he commits a sin against his Creator and a serious crime against society."

"Yes, said Mr. Bruce, "I would go still further; I claim that every one should acquire sufficient knowledge of physiognomy and the laws of heredity to enable him to select a conjugal partner that would insure the offspring to be handsome. There is no necessity for homely people."

The perfect forms and beautiful, symmetrical features of Mr. and Mrs Bruce's children precluded any charge of inconsistency in the remark.

"Don't you think," the doctor asked, "that society is responsible for a great deal of the trouble in the world?"

"I do; a large portion of it. And yet society is a powerful preventive of sin and crime. Every rational being has a certain degree of self-respect, and this evidences a desire for the respect of others, and it is through this desire that money becomes the 'root of all evil.'

"The conventionalities of society are responsible for a vast amount of misery and crime. A familiar quotation from Shakespeare would be just as true if one word were changed to make it read, 'Society (instead of conscience) makes cowards of us all.' People do desperate things to gain the approbation of society, as well as to avoid its disapproval. Society is the hotbed of jealousy and prejudice. It is society that kicks the man that is down and helps the rising man, although the former may be much more worthy than the latter. Society is afraid to utter a word against the man who is at the top, although he may have risen by pulling more worthy ones down. But it is not so bad as it used to be." The speaker smiled.

The conversation had drifted into a subject that touched Dr. Vertebra. He had been the victim of social prejudice and jealousy. His reputation and business interests had



suffered through their cruel influence. His countenance showed that painful recollections were occupying his mind.

"You might carry this thought further," he commenced, "Society is often cruel—cruel to the extent of murder. Not only have reputations been ruined and fortunes marred by the peculiar notions of society, but society's hand has been steeped in the gore of many a suicide. The responsibility for self-destruction is not always placed where it belongs. But I trust, Mr. Bruce, that your new family will solve the problem."

"My new family will correct all evils.

Don't you think," Mr. Bruce continued, "that a majority of adult persons have, sometime in their lives, contemplated suicide?"

"I believe they have at least considered the matter seriously."

"O, it doesn't seem possible," Mrs. Bruce exclaimed. "But then, my life has always been so pleasant that I suppose I am not able to appreciate the troubles and temptations of the more unfortunate ones,"—

She cut her sentence short; looking across the street, she said, "There's a gentleman that will be disappointed this evening."

Fred Instep alighted from a cab drawn by two high-headed dapple grays which dashed up in front of the Elbridge residence.

"Fred," Mrs. Bruce continued, "had Miss Elbridge engaged to go with him to see Lawrence Barrett play Hamlet, but she has decided that she cannot consistently go while helping to care for scarlet fever patients."

"O, well," said Dr. Vertebra, "it will not hurt Fred. A man who is as resourceful as Fred Instep can always adapt himself to the situation, whatever it may be."

"But," said Mrs. Bruce, "the disappointment will be greater because Fred felt himself especially honored on ac-



count of this being the first time that Miss Elbridge ever accepted an invitation from any one to attend the theater. Never before has her mother consented to her going, and Loretta Elbridge is not the girl that would cross her parents in anything that involved a question of morality."

Fred came out and spoke to the driver, who drove off alone; the two young people having decided to substitute an evening together at home for a visit to the theater.

"Fred is paying special attention to Miss Elbridge, is he?" the doctor asked.

"Yes, he solicits her company occasionally."

"Are they congenial spirits?" Doctor Vertebra asked.

"I have often asked myself that question," said Mrs. Bruce, "and have always felt that time would answer it in the negative. But then, we cannot always tell about these things."

"I can answer the question," said Mr. Bruce, evincing considerable interest by the turn he made in his chair and the firm position of his eyes; "there is no congeniality in the case. It is one of those cases of blind society influence. Miss Elbridge accepts Fred's company because he is handsome, intelligent, entertaining and a money maker. And then she is probably beginning to realize that she has been a little too particular as to her associates; and now, having advanced beyond her girlhood, she may not be particular enough. She is a bright, pure, well-balanced woman, but—well—she's associating with Fred Instep, and who knows what will be the result?"

"Now, see here, Albert," said Mrs. Bruce, placing her hand on her husband's shoulder, and smiling in his face, don't get excited; I have implicit faith in Loretta's judgment."

"So have I, but these affairs are not always a question of judgment."—

"O, Papa, come here."

Mr. Bruce answered the call from the sick room and little Melbourne whispered, "Did you get mad at Mama?"

"No, my dear boy, we were only talking."

Mrs. Bruce also went to the boy and assured him that nothing unpleasant had happened.

## CHAPTER XLII.

### A CASE OF MALINGERING.

When I had been in practice about twenty-five years I had accumulated a fair competency and was pretty well pleased with the reputation I had gained within the bounds of my own county, but it was evident that my standing and prominence as a medical man were on the decline, for which I blamed Dr. Vertebra largely, and a few other neighboring physicians in a less degree.

They had exposed many of my tricks and revealed my true character and merits. I had gotten almost to my wit's end in the matter of concocting schemes for keeping up my name. Something new had to be thought of. And then my dreams of wider reputation and great prominence with the profession had not been realized.

These things annoyed me. Whenever I saw a physician's name in the newspapers or medical journals in a way that evinced his prominence, I envied him and sometimes felt uncomfortably jealous. A physician in Des Moines died of blood poison, having become infected while making a surgical operation. He was industrious and ambitious. His fame as a physician and surgeon had already gone beyond the limits of his own county, and when it became known that he was in a dangerous condition from the effects of this accident, the Des Moines newspapers and some others vied with each other in expressing their sympathy and hopes of his recovery. They said many very complimentary things about his ability and prominence. After his death the County and State Medical Societies passed resolutions that were highly satisfactory to his friends and admirers, while the eulogies in +1



and medical journals were profuse. But the part I took in this affair was indulgence and envy.

In accordance with my custom I began to deliberate on the question of turning this incident to my own profit. It called my attention to the subject of fame, the hobby of my life. I was becoming desperately anxious for it, although some of my neighbors thought I had an abundance of it. What a glorious thing to have my name appear in some eulogistic connection in some of the prominent newspapers and medical journals! Something must happen to enable my fame to break through the bounds of my own county. It was chafing under its close confinement. At the end of a year after the above incident a thought struck me. an opportunity presented itself; while operating on an abscess I purposely pricked my finger with the scalpel and applied a drug to the wound which I knew would rapidly produce inflammation. I was careful to locate the wound where the inflammation would follow a chain of lymphatic glands up the arm to the axillary region, where a swelling, if not an abscess would be formed. I had seen this condition result from finger wounds which had been irritated by some foreign substance. My experiment was a success. Before night inflammation had begun to develop. I told my wife I was infected, and of course she spread the news. I decided not to make her a confidant in the business. The following morning my hand was swelled and I complained of a sore streak up the arm as I intended. On the day I went to Des Moines and had a well known physician—~~one who never missed an opportunity to~~ lance my finger. This was mentioned in the Des Moines dailies; I knew it would be, for ~~the doctor was~~ <sup>the doctor was</sup> ~~interested~~ <sup>interested</sup> and liked to see his name in

the surrounding towns. I sent for Dr. Sycophantool, although there were many other physicians in the county who were much more competent and prominent, but none of

whom I could so safely trust with a matter of this kind. I knew he would believe, or at least pretend to believe, what I might tell him; and even if he detected or suspicioned the fraud, he would not expose it. He would take it as a great honor to render professional services to a man of my prominence. When he entered my room he said, "Well, Doctor, what's this you've been doing to yourself? Have you got tired of this mundane sphere and tried to shuffle off this mortal coil?"

"I'm afraid," said I, "that I'm the victim of one of those awful accidents that occasionally happen to the medical man in the discharge of his duties."

The little doctor assumed his proverbial air of importance and tried his best to look wise as he proceeded to examine me. After applying a fever thermometer he shook his head gravely and said, "Your temperature is one hundred and three and three-fourths."

I indulged in one of those smiles that does not come to the surface, but it was all I could do to keep it back. The doctor dressed my hand and wrote two prescriptions. Immediately after he left I took my temperature and found it to be ninety-nine—I suppose the extra half of a degree was caused by my excitement over the affair.

My wife asked Dr. Sycophantool several questions about blood poison. I requested him, emphatically, to come back the next day, which he did. In fact, he visited me every day for two weeks, and two days he came twice. On the second day I said, "Now, Doctor, my wife will be my nurse, and I want you to give strict orders that no one is to be admitted into my room except by my request."

"All right; that request shall be granted. I hope you will not worry. Your chances for recovery will be much better if you don't."

I applied the drug again to the wound to renew the irritation, and in a couple of days there actually was quite a swelling under my arm. I had the doctor lance it, and

that news of this would confirm the rumor of my serious condition. But, of course, nothing but blood followed the lance. I pretended to be very weak. For several days the general report was that I was at the point of death, yet I would not allow a counsel of physicians on the case. I did not want any but the one over whom I had complete control, to see me—not every physician can be used as a tool by another. Then imagine my chagrin one Sunday afternoon, when two physicians from the County Seat were announced. Of course, I did not dare to forbid their admittance. They remained half an hour, during which time I did as good a job of malingering as possible. I appreciated their friendship, but wondered if their visit would not work disaster to my scheme.

A week or so after my accident (?) I sent my doctor to Des Moines on an important errand and the next day my wife brought in one of the Des Moines dailies and read this item to me:

"Dr. Sycophantool, of ————, was in the city yesterday consulting some of our leading surgeons in regard to amputating the arm of Dr. Fussanfeathers, of Pettville, a prominent physician of ———— county, to save his life; he having become infected while operating on a patient."

I thought this was the most delightful reading I ever heard. And it was a gratification to Dr. Sycophantool to see his name in print, especially under such circumstances.

Dr. Sycophantool stated to our County Medical Society which met while I was sojourning in my bedroom that I had one foot in the grave, and my recovery was very uncertain; but I never heard of any resolutions of sympathy. And now I will take this opportunity to state to the world that I did not die from the effects of that "blood poison," and I am glad of it, for I was not ready to depart this life. Nor was the fruition of that audacious scheme what I expected. I made the mistake of recovering too rapidly—I



lifted that "one foot" out of the grave too soon. On my first appearance on the street, at the end of two weeks, it was remarked that I did not look as if I had been sick. Feeling ashamed of looking so well to my neighbors, I concluded to go to Colfax Springs to recuperate (?). Stopping off in Des Moines on my way down, I met a physician from my county who said, "Hello, Doctor! How is it that you are looking so hale and hearty so soon after that severe illness from blood poison? You seem to look as well as ever."

On the next block I met Albert Bruce, and his first remark was, "Why, doctor, I'm surprised at your looking so well. Judging from what I heard a day or so ago, I should have expected you to look like a wasted invalid instead of a robust two-hundred pound man."

I spent a week at the Springs, a good portion of the time searching newspapers for comments and words of congratulation on my hairbreadth escape from the fatal effects of blood poison, but did not find a syllable. No words ever passed between Dr .Sycophantool and myself showing any mutual understanding in regard to the facts concerning this affair; yet I always believed he knew it was all a sham intended for an advertisement, and that he knew I did not assume that he was too stupid to divine my object. We had trained together till we understood each other thoroughly.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### SOME NEW THOUGHTS.

A few days after the events in the preceding chapter, I was engaged in conversation with Mrs. Holley at one of her neighbors where I was visiting a patient.

"I was so glad, Doctor," said she, "to hear of your convalescence after that severe illness."

"Thank you," I replied.

"I suppose," she continued, "you congratulate yourself on the favorable termination of the case."

"Yes, indeed. I presume I am much more pleased over it than anybody else."

"That evidently is true, but don't you think your friends rejoiced too?"

"Yes, I suppose so. But who are our friends? Those who hope to be benefited by us, but desert us as soon as they think they see something better?"

Mrs. Holley lowered her head, looked over her glasses with an expression of astonishment and replied,

"True friends never desert us."

I had had occasion during the last few years to put some thoughts on the subject of friendship. Men and women who had formerly stood by me and manifested staunch friendship, even doing unreasonable things in my interest, not only had become lukewarm, but were patronizing my competitor and criticising me as severely as they formerly had him. The trouble was, I had been recognizing only remunerative or selfish friendship.

"But," I asked, how are we to distinguish between true and false friendship? I've met with some shocking surprises along these lines."

"No doubt every one has had such experiences; but then, there are tests of friendship. Dryden gives a good one:

"Friendship, of itself a holy tie,  
Is made more sacred by adversity."

I too, happened to remember some quotations that I had recently read on the subject; so I replied, "Shakespeare was a greater man than Dryden, and he says,

"Most friendship is feigning."

"Most friendship!" Mrs. Holly quickly replied; "that may be true, and so are most persons wicked, but that need not lower our appreciation of the righteous ones."

"If you have money, you can have friends," I said.

"I do not accept that theory. Money does not make friends. It only attracts attention and commands respect. It makes idolaters."

I now felt myself on the defensive, but willing to defend my position.

I said: "Whoever knew a man to lose his fortune, or a woman her personal charms, without losing friends?"

"Doctor," Mrs. Holley said, "you and I seem to be talking about two different kinds of friends. Yours are like our shadows, keeping close to us while we walk in the sunshine, but deserting us as soon as we pass into the shade; while mine regard friendship as a peculiar boon of heaven and are willing to bear each other's infirmities."

While I was hesitating for something to say, Mrs. Holley added, "I think, Doctor, that you have friends that would stick to you, and even manifest increased interest in you, in case adversity should overtake you and deprive you of your possessions."

At the close of this sentence she arose and walked across the room without her cane, which made her lameness more apparent. On attempting to turn around she staggered. Just then I was facing a combination of cirer



which touched me as I had not been touched for many a day. Here was a woman whose every step furnished painful evidence of my incompetency and criminal carelessness. She had been convinced by reliable authority that proper surgery could have saved her from these years of pain and inconvenience. She had often been informed of the fact that I had attempted to exonerate myself by casting a slur on her in the statement that her false modesty prevented me from making the proper examination and treatment. Yet here she was treating me with all the kindness and friendship I could have expected from my most ardent admirer. Then, to add to the embarrassment, this conversation was occasioned by an abominable example of fraud on my part. I wanted to get away. The chafing guilt made me timid. But Mrs. Holley seemed to hold me with a sort of tyrannical magnetism. I felt that she had some thing to say that would be good for me, yet I did not want to hear it.

Mrs. Holley seated herself closer to me. There was a cheerful seriousness in her expression when she said, "Doctor, doesn't blood poison, produced as it was in your case, usually prove fatal?"

Misapprehending her motive, I hesitated and trembled, fearing that she was going to question the genuineness of my case. I was not in a state of mind either to justify my conduct or acknowledge the fraud.

"Yes," I said, "as a rule the issue is unfavorable."

"Then, of course, you feel thankful that the result was no worse?"

"I certainly do," was the answer.

"I believe," she began, "that a merciful Providence often intervenes to avert a calamity that would naturally follow our mistakes and misfortunes, and when we have reason for thinking we have been the objects of His mercy it should magnify Him in our eyes and humble us before His omnipotence. But we must be careful not to mistake

a blessing for a calamity. Sometimes our sufferings are calculated to bring us into a better life."

These remarks were making me rather uncomfortable, and I was at a loss to know what to say. It was awkward not to say something. Finally I ventured the question,

"Then you think it was a special dispensation of Providence and not my physician that saved my life?"

"Well," Mrs. Holley answered, "it would be presumptuous for me to express a positive opinion, but I should dislike the idea of not believing that our loving Father sometimes favors us in a miraculous way."

"Yes," said Mrs. Pollard, a neighbor who had been listening to the conversation, "I think, Doctor, if you had genuine blood poison it was something besides Dr. Sycophantool that saved you. I haven't any faith in that little, conceited morphine eater. He's a little off in his head about half the time."

Mrs. Pollard's remarks were no more comforting than the other woman's. "If you had genuine blood poison!" Wherefore that if? Had the question of fraud been discussed in the neighborhood? I realized that I was becoming more and more sensitive to disagreeable circumstances, and was losing confidence in my ability to counteract damaging influences. This circumstance was making me nervous and I wanted to change the subject. How could I turn it into butter making, raising chickens, making pickles or preventing hens from setting? But just as a remark on one of these topics was about to escape my lips, Mrs. Holley said,

"It seems to me there is no class of people so well prepared to appreciate the mysteries and wonders of nature and feel their responsibility to an allwise Creator as physicians."

My perplexity was increasing. This subject was foreign to my thoughts. I was beginning to feel resentful.

"Yes," I said, "and they often have occasion to observe the mysteries of human nature, and the whimsicalities of people."

I suddenly discovered that I was in a great hurry to see a patient over on another road.



## CHAPTER XLIV.

### UNFORTUNATE INCIDENTS.

Again we will transfer the scene of this story to Des Moines.

About ten o'clock one bright October morning a man by the name of John Stubbs, about thirty years of age, led by a woman a few years younger, stepped into Dr. Bicep's office on Locust street. The man's right eye was covered with a white bandage, and the other through sympathy, was in such an irritable condition that he could not use it. His attitude indicated intense suffering. On being ushered into the consultation room when their turn came, the woman said, "Doctor, I want you to examine my husband's eye, and see what you think can be done for it."

"Very well," said Dr. Biceps, "bring him to this chair, please. What seems to be the trouble with your eye?"

"I got it hurt, in the first place; a little piece of iron struck it and stuck in the ball while I was cutting a pipe in two with a cold chisel; and I went to see Dr. Fussanfeathers in Petville. He treated it two weeks, but it's getting worse right along; I got alarmed about it, and concluded to come and see you. The other eye is getting awful sore and weak, too."

"Do you live in Petville?"

Dr. Bicep had gained a state-wide reputation as a specialist, being acknowledged by the profession to be one of the most skillful oculists in the country.

"The other eye is considerably inflamed, too, I see," said the doctor, carefully removing the bandage. "That's a bad looking eye. Did Dr. Fussanfeathers succeed in removing the piece of iron?"

"He said he did."

"How long after the accident?"

"About two hours."

"Can you see any with this eye?" the doctor asked, carefully separating the lids.

"Not a bit."

After making a thorough examination of both eyes, Dr. Biceps informed the man that there was no hopes of saving the injured eye, but that it would have to be removed in order to save the other one.

"It is a very sad affair," said the unfortunate man's wife. "Don't you think, Doctor, that it might have been saved if it had been treated properly in the first place?"

"I have nothing to say about that. It is enough for me to know the present conditions and demands."

"We didn't like the way Dr. Fussanfeathers acted in the case," the woman said, in tones tinged with bitterness and a threatening jerk of the head.

The hour was set for the operation, and Dr. Biceps performed it successfully.

I was somewhat disturbed on hearing of this circumstance, but hoped its publicity would not be extensive enough to injure me very much. In a short time I was able to drop it from my mind and enjoy my usual sleep. But my peace of mind was not to last long. While waiting on a patient I saw the sheriff drive up and enter my reception room. One of my leading sources of gratification was to receive a call from a prominent citizen of a neighboring town, especially a town that had more than one physician. During the ten minutes I spent with my patient, I was rejoicing over the honor of receiving the patronage of the high sheriff from the county seat where there were several popular physicians, and contemplating the neutralizing effect it would have on the unfortunate issue of the Stubbs case. The prospective fat fee from a county officer, too, was no small matter.

"Hello, Mr. Sheriff!" I exclaimed, with a broad smile, as I entered the reception room. "We always welcome visitors from the county-seat," giving my caller an unusually hearty hand-shake.

The sheriffs' smile and manner could not be described. It was a combination of mirth, embarrassment and business air.

"Be seated," I said, offering him the best chair in my office; but instead of accepting the courtesy, he extracted a paper from his vest pocket and read a notice of action against me for ten thousand dollars damage claimed by one John Stubbs for injuries resulting from malpractice.

My breath almost stopped.

"This is all nonsense," I said. "It is strange a man can be so foolish as to do such a thing."

"Such is life," said the sheriff. And then he smiled with more freedom than he did a minute before.

"Somebody's put Stubbs up to this," I said.

The sheriff, feeling that a change of subject would be a relief, said, "Is there much sickness, Doctor?"

"No, not half enough," I answered.

"I suppose not, if you are going to have to pay Mr. Stubbs ten thousand dollars," he jestingly remarked.

"It will be a cold day when Stubbs gets that ten thousand dollars," I said. I believe it is nothing but a black-mailing game."

My wits were at once set to work, devising the best course to pursue in the matter. Feeling the necessity of a first-class lawyer to defend the case, I concluded to employ my old neighbor, Albert Bruce.

After reading the petition, Mr. Bruce said, "Doctor, what will be your answer to this?"

"I deny the whole claim," I said.

"Of course, doctor, you know that for an attorney to conduct a law suit with the greatest assurance of success,



he must be in possession of the actual facts so far as his client knows them."

"Yes, I understand that."

"Now, were you in your office when the plaintiff called to have his eye treated, according to allegation three?"

"Well," said I, "perhaps they can find witnesses to testify that I was."

"Were you in Des Moines according to allegation four?"

"They may be able to prove that, too."

"Were you intoxicated?"

"Well, I had been drinking some."

"Were you under the influence of liquor at any time while treating plaintive's eye?"

"I don't think I was; yet they may swear that they smelled liquor on my breath."

"Did you fail to employ antiseptic measures in regard to water, sponges, instruments, etc.?"

"O, well, so far as that is concerned, what do they know about antiseptic surgery? They can't prove that the things I used were not sterilized."

Mr. Bruce paused a while and then said, "I will take the case under advisement. You call again at three o'clock this afternoon."

I was half an hour tardy in fulfilling my engagement, yet Mr. Bruce did not seem to be irritated, notwithstanding his systematic and punctual habits.

"Doctor," he frankly said, "I would advise you to try to effect a compromise with Mr. Stubbs. It would very likely be the cheapest way out of the trouble."

"O, no! no! Mr. Bruce, I could not think of such a thing. It would be equal to pleading guilty; and I couldn't stand that."

"It would be better to plead guilty than to be proven guilty," Mr. Bruce said. "I might win this case for you," he went on, "but according to your own admissions, in order to do so, I would have to ask you to swear to something that

is not true and then pretend to believe it myself and try to persuade the jury to do the same."

I felt very much disappointed as well as angered at the lawyer and it did not take me long to bid him good-by. I pondered over his remarks as I walked down the street: "Would have to ask you to swear to something that is not true and then try to persuade the jury to believe it."

Didn't want to do that! Strange policy for a lawyer! I supposed the paramount thing was to succeed and let other conditions take care of themselves. This had always been my motto. If a man is a success he is everything. Nothing succeeds like success. However, on reflection, I had to acknowledge that Mr. Bruce's actions in this case were consistent with his character and life. "But," I said to myself, "does the world appreciate such virtues?"

While trying to decide what to do next, I met a friend from my town who invited me to his room in the Kirkwood House where he was stopping. As we passed through the drug store in connection with the hotel, my friend made a sign to one of the clerks who followed us to the room with a bottle of fine brandy. There is no time when a man is so willing to justify himself in taking a drink as when he is in trouble through his own fault.

Our visit was cut short on account of my friend's having to hurry to his train. In the hotel office I picked up a *Des Moines* paper and read the following:

"John Stubbs of Petville has brought suit against Dr. Fussanfeathers for for \$10,000 damages on account of malpractice. This is the case that was mentioned in these columns a few weeks ago in which Dr. Biceps operated for the removal of the eyeball."

Anger, revenge and retaliation followed each other through the avenues of my mind in rapid succession. I was really mad, but I tried to reason: Somebody has encouraged Stubbs to sue me. He appeared friendly until after he had been to see Dr. Biceps; and the reference in

the petition to aseptic treatment shows that Dr. Biceps was the instigator of this suit. My brain was fired. I clenched my fist, struck the palm of my hand and suddenly sprang to my feet and would have rushed on an errand of revenge, but, noticing that some bystanders were attracted by my actions, I quietly walked across to the cigar stand and bought some cigars; but the tumult in my breast went on just the same. I hurriedly walked out on to the street saying to myself, "There must be an explanation and apology."

It didn't take me many minutes to reach Dr. Biceps' office. A young man sitting in a chair protecting his eyes from the light after treatment, was the only person in besides the doctor.

"Howd' you do, Doctor?" I said.

"How 'd you do, sir? Will you have a seat?" politely responded Dr. Biceps, pointing to a chair.

"How's business?" I asked.

"Unusually quiet just now. But so much better for the people, I suppose."

"I came up to have a talk with you," was my next remark.

"All right, sir. What is your name, please?"

"Why, I'm Doctor Fussanfeathers."

"Do you live in the city?"

"No, sir, I live in Petville."

"Yes, yes, I remember," the doctor said, nodding his head reflectively. He looked as if something had flashed into his mind. The necessity of my introducing myself would have been mortifying, had any of my neighbors been present. They had been trained to believe that I was known to the medical profession.

Dr. Biceps' courtesy and pleasing manner was a disappointment to me, for I was determined to administer a severe rebuke to him, but there is nothing like kindness to turn away wrath. He hesitated, evidently waiting for me to introduce my business. I was speechless. The remarks



I had planned would not fit the conditions now. I must think of something else.

"How long have you been in practice in Petville?"

"Long enough to learn how to ruin a man's eye, I suppose," I answered with a bitter smile.

"Most of us learn that early in our professional experience," he said, with a smile, not so tinged with bitterness.

"You operated on an eye a few weeks ago that I had been treating, didn't you?"

"A man by the name of Stubbs? Yes, I believe he did mention your name in connection with the case. How's he getting along?"

"I don't know," I answered abruptly. "Did you know he had sued me for malpractice?"

"Yes, I think I saw a mention of it in the paper. It is an unfortunate affair. I was sorry to hear of it."

I persuaded myself to think there was enough insincerity in his expression to serve my purpose, and said, "Doctor, do you know what caused him to sue me?"

He certainly saw that I was firing up, for his countenance and voice changed.

"Well," he commenced, "I don't understand why I should be called on to explain that matter. My opinion could be nothing but conjecture at most, aside from the natural presumption that the man thought he was entitled to damages for the loss of his eye."

"Do you know of any influence that was brought to bear on him by others to induce him to sue me?"

"I do not."

"I am inclined," said I, "to think, judging from circumstances, and what I have heard, that you know more about it than you pretend to."

"What am I to understand, Doctor, by your conduct? That some one has misrepresented me? Or, have your own imaginations caused you to come up here and offer me an insult?"

Dr. Biceps rose from his chair and took a step toward me as he finished the sentence. His countenance showed some excitement, and as he stood looking me in the face, something within me — possibly the brandy I drank at the Kirkwood House — said, "This man has wronged you and deserves to be forced to right it, but he is trying to bluff me; and if I waver in my demands, I will be branded a coward and lose my self-respect."

But the suspense gave me time to reflect; if he is going to meet me half way in making serious business of this affair, I'll tack a little—argue the case from a business standpoint.

"Now, see here, Doctor," I commenced, "if this suit goes on it is sure to injure you more than it does me, for I have friends—influential friends, by the score—who will stick by me through thick and thin, and they're getting the impression that you exaggerated the condition of that man Stubbs' eye in order to get a chance to operate on it, and for the cheap advertising you hoped to get out of it; and then to extend the advertisement into my part of the country, you advised him to sue me for damages."

Here the flush on his face deepened, the fire in his eye rekindled, and every muscle in his body seemed to stiffen.

But I braced up—or, rather, the brandy braced me up—under the thought that he was a man of about one hundred and fifty pounds, while my avoirdupois tipped the beam at two hundred and five, and we were about the same age. Then, besides, I recalled the fact that, not many years before I had a hostler who was quite an expert at boxing and he had given me a good many lessons in the "manly art of self-defense." These advantages inspired me with confidence. In fact I was just in the humor to invite a pugilistic encounter. Those drinks evidently had fight in them.

"And it is reported," I continued, "that this is not the first time you have violated the Code in this same way, and if you continue such conduct it won't be long till your repu-



tation will be ruined ; but if you will sign a statement that, under the most modern and scientific treatment with the strictest attention, a wound in the eyeball made by a rusty iron frequently results in the necessity of removing the eye, the suit very likely will go no further, you will retain my friendship and favors, and avert a serious damage to your reputation and business."

The doctor assumed an expression of contempt, dropped his eyes to the floor, then looking me square in the face, said :

"I am astounded that a man with sufficient intelligence and common sense to follow a learned profession can have the presumption and impudence that you are exhibiting. What do I care for the threats of such a man ? The very execution of your purpose would carry with it its own ruin. I cannot believe that you are sincere in charging me with imposing on Mr. Stubbs. I don't have to resort to brutal tricks to get business. I am willing to trust to merit for my reputation. And as to the compromise you propose, I take it as a base insult that could come only from a man without principle ; and to say that I induced Stubbs to sue you is to call me a fool. What interest could I have in damaging your reputation and business ? On the contrary, if I should act merely from selfish motives I would want you to have as many patients as possible. It would be to my benefit ; the origin of this controversy points to the reason why."

This insinuation was more than I could stand. Feeling an increased sense of personal injury, I was now anxious for the controversy to come to an issue. What could I say aggravating enough to make my antagonist attempt to strike me ? Of course I could parry off the blow ; then I would have a legal excuse to humiliate him with a thumping and very likely induce him to help me effect an easy compromise with Mr. Stubbs.



"You scoundrel," I said, "how dare you disparage my medical skill? You know you lied when—"

"Take that for your insolence!" he said, preceding the words with an open-handed slap in my face before I had time to contract a muscle. Disconcerted by his prompt action, I was not so quick with my response as I might have been; he warded off my first pass, which was aimed at his face and stepped back. Encouraged by this supposed sign of backing out, I made a rush and struck him on the left shoulder, causing him to stagger. But this seemed only to bring him to realize that he was engaged with an active antagonist. He instantly straightened up, jumped forward, parried the blow I aimed at his eye, and went to pelting me in the face so rapidly that I lost all power of resistance. I turned my back to him, but even that did not stop the motion of his fist. He struck me twice on the back of my neck. I then dropped to the floor, face down; he took this as a sign of surrender and ceased hostilities.

A peculiar feature of this fight and a very satisfactory one to me, was that the blows the doctor dealt me were not very heavy; yet a profuse epistaxis and two eyes dressed in mourning was the result. He stood over me a few seconds and then said with a tremulous voice,

"Get up now and see how you feel."

The command was obeyed. I was thoroughly competent, however, to tell how I felt without getting up. He gave me a bowl of water and a sponge and said, "Would you like some help to wash your face?"

I gave him no answer.

"Here's a towel. Is your nose still bleeding?"

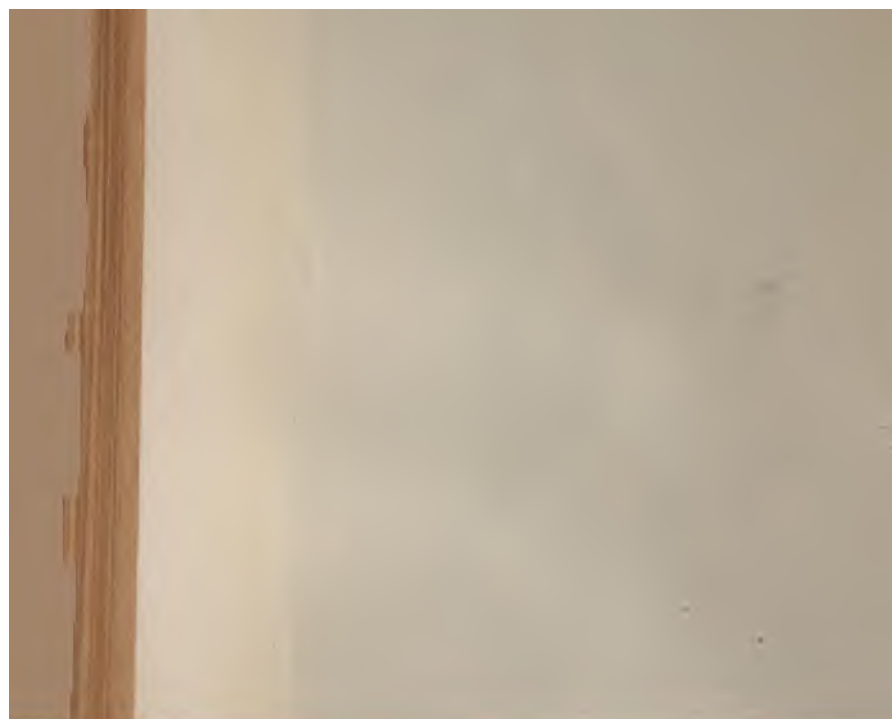
"No," I growled.

"I'm sorry this thing happened," he said.

His courtesy intensified my humiliation, but while washing the blood from my whiskers before the mirror, the sight of my swollen eyes, which I knew would soon turn black, set me to reflecting: What an awful mistake I had made in com-



"GET UP NOW, AND SEE HOW YOU FEEL."





ing up here! The training from my hostler availed be nothing. It will be impossible to keep this affair from the ears of my neighbors; it will injure my business; Dr. Vertebra will reap some benefit from my folly; I will have to stay away from home till the evidence of this encounter leaves my face.

My regrets grew into anger. The idea of being conquered was more exasperating than pain from my adversary's blows. I had too proud a spirit to give up without some back talk.

"If you think," I commenced, "this affair is settled, you will find yourself badly mistaken. You got the advantage of me this time, but you will never do it again."

Dr. Biceps made no reply.

"I can find plenty of physicians and others, too," I continued, "that will verify all that I have said about your meddling with other doctors' business and trying to break down their reputation."

He still said nothing. Sometimes a man in an altercation exaggerates his self-respect as well as the wounds inflicted on his pride and is thus provoked to a degree of courage and violence that is only momentary. I thought such was the case with Dr. Biceps on this occasion, therefore I concluded that now, after the heat of the excitement was over, he would be easily put on the run, and I went on, "You are not worthy of a decent man's respect, and ought to be drummed out of the profession that you are dishonoring. You'll soon regret that you didn't accept my proposition."

During this little lecture he sat still with his eyes upon the floor and I imagined there was a penitent expression in his face; but while I was rejoicing that my invectives were affording some requital for the defeat I had just suffered, the doctor raised his eyes and commenced in mild, but firm tones and dignified manner:

"Perhaps I would be lowering my dignity to take any

notice of a silly tirade from one who has forfeited his right to my respect, but since you are made in the semblance of a man, let me hope that you possess some redeeming traits and that your blinding conceit and self-importance may be penetrated to the extent of revealing to your senses some of your diabolical traits that are so conspicuous to your unprejudiced neighbors. I speak advisedly, for I know your history and your methods. My information comes from the medical profession in your own county, and your neighbors."

He stepped to the door, locked it, put the key in his pocket. This sent a chill up my spinal column, and I trembled like an aspen leaf, supposing something terrible was coming. He resumed: "I have even heard your former admirers talk about you—those who used to help you carry out your nefarious schemes for building yourself up by pulling others down; schemes for misleading the people into the belief that you were a medical man of superior ability; but there isn't a person in the world that truly knows you and is not governed by prejudice, but that will agree with your professional neighbors who say that the only line in which you excel is in deceiving the people as to your qualifications. You are naturally bright enough to have become a fair scholar and a skillful physician, but your heart has been so occupied with desires for worldly glory that there was little room in it for anything else. Yielding to evil impulses has obtunded your conscience. You have been able to fool the people simply because they were totally incompetent to judge of a physician's qualifications. You are bound to acknowledge that this is a fact well known to the medical profession, and awful will be the final and eternal judgment on the physician who takes advantage of this defenseless condition of the race.

"The members of the profession who are acquainted with you know about your shrewd tricks, and the only thing that saves you from professional ostracism is the success with



which you play those tricks. In making this statement I have to acknowledge a deplorable weakness in human nature generally and the medical profession in particular. You speak of my meddling with other physicians' business—my professional brethren do not treat me as if they could endorse such a statement; but I coolly assert, and stand ready to prove the assertion, that the only way that you are known to the profession outside of your own county is through the peculiar methods you so diligently employ to disparage the reputation and ability of competitors."

I was beginning to feel like a criminal receiving a sentence before a tribunal of justice. The doctor went on: "And now, as I witness the evidence of your approach to eternity in those gray hairs, together with your confirmed habit of using intoxicating liquors, I am actuated by a common feeling of humanity to ask if you hope to get a sufficient length of enjoyment out of whatever you might be able to gain through unprofessional and ungentlemanly conduct to justify such a course? Character is the only thing a man can take with him to the grave, therefore he should not barter it away."

The doctor's telephone bell rang, but before he went into the room to answer it, he unlocked the outside door and while he was gone I left his office a wiser man than when I entered it. I knew more about myself than ever before. I sneaked back to the Kirkwood house, hired a room and remained there until the signs of trouble had almost disappeared from my face. On returning home my excuse for being away so long was that I had been in Chicago, doing some special work in a hospital.



## CHAPTER XLV.

### RECEIVING AN IMPRESSION.

I had become thoroughly confirmed in the habit of expediting business, especially when visiting patients in the rural districts. Two objects were responsible for this: one was to get back to my office to prevent any calls from being transferred to another doctor on account of my absence; the other was to keep the people constantly under the impression that I was always rushed with business; hence my restlessness at Mr. Catlin's may be accounted for when I gave his little child a certain treatment which necessitated my remaining at the house two hours. To add to the annoyance, Mrs. Holly stepped in about the time I began to feel uncomfortable over the detention. While I was compelled to entertain the highest respect for this woman, and even admire her, her presence always embarrassed me. It was impossible for me to look her in the face or talk to her without becoming unhappy through recollections of the past. Yet from her actions no one would suspicion that I had ever caused her any discomfort. As she sat fanning the child, she seemed engrossed in serious thought.

"Doctor," she said, "I have often wondered if physicians did not take unusual interest in and feel a special responsibility in a sick child that is placed in their charge."

"I don't know," I replied, "why they should take any more interest in one patient than another."

"Don't you?" she said, half to herself. "They are so helpless and innocent. Then we never know what important mission is before them in the world, the fulfillment of which depends on their lives."

"But," I asked, "suppose the child's life should turn out

bad, wouldn't it have been better for the world if it had died in innocence?"

"God has given us our lives and it is a duty we owe Him to preserve them. Let us do our duty and leave the consequence with Him. I have also wondered if physicians do not become so inured to death that they do not look upon it as seriously as they might."

"O, I think in some cases death is a serious matter. It depends on your age and what condition you leave your family in."

"I cannot imagine," Mrs. Holley said, "a case of death that would not be a serious matter, but in reality life is a more serious affair than death, because the triumph of death depends on the qualities of the life that preceded it."

"Triumph of death?" I exclaimed, with a smile. "That's a singular expression. Isn't death always the same, so far as the dead are concerned?"

"Doctor, that is a dangerous theory. I hope you will not always hold to it. Those who maintain that belief must not expect a triumph at death."

Some experiences within the the past year—the blood poisoning, the affair with Dr. Biceps and perhaps others, had caused me to put more thought on the subject of eternity and religion than I had been accustomed to. I was willing to hear Mrs. Holley talk on the topic that seemed so dear to her, even if I could not agree with her on all points.

"It always seemed so strange," I said, "that the Creator would create a race of beings and make a code of rules and laws for them to obey, under penalty, and yet give them a disposition and temperament that makes it impossible for them to live up to the code."

Mrs. Holley looked at me a moment; one of those conquering smiles peculiar to her spread over her face. Her eyes seemed full of pity. Her voice was just as sweet as her face.





count; but He knew that if He did not place him under higher obligation than those which merely command the respect of his fellow man, he would forget his Creator and fall below the moral standard."

"But, Mrs. Holley," I replied, "in these times of active competition, when, in order to maintain a respectable position in society, one has to have a considerable income, his time and best thoughts must be devoted to business, or others will get the advantage and impose on him."

Mrs. Holley looked pleased; yet I could not think my remarks had brought the glad expression to her face.

"Then Doctor," she said, "you desire the respect and commendation of your neighbors?"

"I certainly do. A man might as well be dead as to be without them."

"How long do you expect to enjoy it?"

"As long as I live."

"How long will that be?"

"I don't know."

"You cannot hope," she said, "for that to be very long, of course; and now, please allow me another question: isn't it a fact that the more influential and powerful the person, the higher you value his endorsement and friendship?"

"Yes, that is natural."

"Then why do you not strive to command the endorsement of your Creator, who possesses all power, all wisdom? That would be worth more than the unstinted homage of the whole world."

I winced under these remarks. I felt that Mrs. Holley was conversant with my life-long ambition and desires. I had always steeled myself against religious exhortations and warnings, but I received this good woman's word with serious consideration. They produced a feeling within me that I never experienced before. And Mrs. Holley seemed to realize that I was in a condition to be talked to on the

subject. She said, "Doctor, have you ever contemplated the beauties of the Christian life?"

At first I thought she was going a little too far, was manifesting undue concern about me; was meddling; but it was only my courage failing. I simply felt condemned. A spirit of resentment suddenly sprung up in my heart.

"I have never been able to see that Christians—church members—are any happier or better citizens than those who make no pretensions toward Christianity. Christians have their ups and downs the same as others; in fact, some of the worst misfortunes I ever knew happened to professed Christians."

"Yes," Mrs. Holley promptly replied, God's people may have bitter experiences, but God sometimes sanctifies our afflictions. And some hearts can be softened only in the mill of adversity."

She paused as if to give me opportunity to reflect or reply. "You spoke," she continued, "of your best thoughts being devoted to preventing others from imposing on you; some men would enjoy a clearer conscience if they would take more pains to avoid imposing on others."

I hardly knew whether to consider this in a general way or take it as an insinuation, but I felt sure she meant me when she added, "There are some who think nothing of making others unhappy—do not regard it as a sin—if, in doing so, they further their own interests."

Thoughts of various crimes I had committed against competitors, especially Dr. Vertebra, chased one another through my mind in rapid succession. My feelings bordered on self-condemnation. Heretofore my conscience was sufficiently elastic to enable me to justify all my actions, or at least not to experience any compunctions over them. Mrs. Holley certainly read my mind and knew I was in a condition to be exhorted.

"Doctor, you have been a good citizen; I wish you would be a good Christian."

"O, Mrs. Holley, I don't believe I could. It isn't in accordance with my nature."

"Many of the most devoted followers of the Master might have said the same thing at one time. Just open the portals of your heart and let in the light of Christ's love and the difficulty will be removed."

"But," said I, with a smile, "I wouldn't know how to do that."

"Search the Scriptures," she said, "and the way will be clear."

The sick child called for its mother, who was in another room, to get it a drink of water.

"I'll get it for you," said Mrs. Holley as she made a motion to rise from her chair.

"Sit still, Mrs. Holley," I promptly said, "I'll get it." I did not want to witness in her halting step the evidence of my criminal incompetency.



## CHAPTER XLVI.

### UNDER CONVICTION.

The conversation between Mrs. Holley and me at Mr. Catlin's was an epoch in my medical career, if not in my life. But there was a struggle between my ambition and my vanity, and a growing sense of justice and truth before I could get the consent of my mind to give up certain habits and live a different life. It was wormwood and gall to admit that I had been wrong.

I was now realizing that the seed I had sown from which I expected to reap a great crop of fame and fortune was disappointing. Too many tares had grown up with it.

I had often been flattered with compliments on my success in life, but of late years those compliments fell flat; for my conscience, obtuse as it was, stepped in and modified the enjoyment. I had really begun to lament my course and to brood over the difficulty I would experience in practicing the self-denial necessary to the reformation I wanted to make. Remembering my good friend, Mrs. Holley's advice, I concluded to "search the Scriptures."

There had never been a copy of this book in my office, and it took some hunting to find the one at my residence. I opened it at random, and this is the first verse my eyes dropped on: "For my soul is full of trouble, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave." I dropped the book to my knee, looked into space a moment and said to myself, "There is no consolation in this. The Almighty knows no better than I do that I am in trouble and that my life is two-thirds spent." But thinking that perhaps this verse was

only opening the way for something more comforting, I read on: "I am counted with them that go down into the pit."

This shocked me. I felt as one receiving a premonition of evil which he was unprepared to meet. I sat for a few minutes in a state of mental stagnation. When the condition began to wear off, I reopened the book, hardly realizing what I was doing, and read, "whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off."

A more severe shock than the other, perhaps, was prevented by at once setting about interpreting this passage. "Privily slandereth his neighbor." This certainly meant me, for that was just the way I had slandered my professional brethren—privily, without my hand being seen in the matter. Yes, I did my slandering by proxy, clandestinely. Practice had made me an expert at secretly damaging competitors. Yes, I had become so proficient that I could almost cause them to slander themselves.

Hoping the remainder of the verse would afford some relief, I read on: "Him that hath a high head and a proud heart will not I suffer." No consolation yet. This also applied to me, but what was I to do about it? As to slandering my competitors, I might relent, but a high head and a proud heart was the delight and boast of my life. They were my most conspicuous accomplishments. My exaggerated haughtiness had made me appear ridiculous in the eyes of sensible people. On hearing comments on the matter once, Dr. Vertebra remarked, "Just wait; something will happen yet that will bring him down to the earth." "Of course," remarked a bystander, "for he is soaring on false wings."

I could now almost feel myself dropping.

So far, searching the Scriptures gave me no promise of lightening my heavy heart. I had courage enough, however, to open the Bible again, but had read only a few verses

when I came to this one: "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but I will remember the name of the Lord our God."

I said any of my neighbors would know at a glance which part of the verse applied to me. They know that I always drive the finest buggy the market can afford, besides keeping an elegant phaeton for my wife's use, and a shining barouche to take our visiting friends out in, and that I sometimes keep five or six horses when I need only two in my practice.

This made me feel foolish, and I shrunk with shame on recalling the fact that, as an advertisement, I occasionally hired livery rigs while my own horses were kicking their stable to pieces for want of exercise, expecting the people to say, "Dr. Fussanfeathers has run down his horses and and resorted to the livery stable."

Yes, I was one of those who trusted in chariots and horses, but did not remember the name of the Lord our God.

Not getting any comfort out of the Psalms, I turned to another portion of the Bible, and the first verse that attracted my attention was, "The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment."

I couldn't doubt the truth of this. I had considered myself triumphant, but my triumph was achieved through hypocrisy, and my enjoyment of it seems to be ended. How short it was.

I was beginning to realize that my old friends and admirers were discovering my shortcomings and losing faith in my ability and integrity. As I sat wondering how I might find compensation for my loss of prestige, a dash of wind turned over a few leaves of the Bible, and I saw this passage: "There is no darkness or shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves."

I believed it; for I had been unable to evade even the scrutiny of man in the prosecution of my iniquitous schemes. I was getting discouraged, for nothing I had



found yet offered me any relief; but I concluded to persevere a little longer; being afraid, however, to risk any more in this chapter, I turned to another and read, "or what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?"

I don't know why, but I was struck with a flash of humor and laughed. Probably it was the discovery that so many passages in the Bible seemed to be speaking especially to me.

I suddenly experienced an agonizing compunction of conscience. I arose and walked the floor with the Bible in my hand. As I halted before the mirror I said to it, "You reflect my face very clearly, but no more than this book does my heart."

Searching the Scriptures was not proving to be a pleasant occupation. I sat down by the window, but kept the Bible in my hands. It was a dark day. The whole face of the earth was enveloped in one solid, black cloud; but the sky was no darker than my heart.

It seemed strange that, after hearing so much about the peace and comfort people get out of the Bible, my unhappiness should be increased by reading it. I imagine that Dr. Vertebra, with all his misfortunes including my well planned opposition to him, never felt so miserable as I did, sitting at that window, brooding over the past and contemplating the uninviting future. Finally I felt an impulse to search further, and simultaneous with my opening the Bible there was a rent in the clouds opposite the sun. The intense light was dazling, yet I was able to read, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee."

This looked encouraging. At least it diverted my mind from my troubles. But on account of my lack of familiarity with the Scriptures, I was not ordinarily capable of understanding their meaning or of obeying their injunction. How was I to cast my burden upon the Lord? Perhaps further search would enlighten me. But it was with some

trepidation that I resumed my reading. A few lines brought me to this passage: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

This was somewhat consoling, for I believed that I was under conviction and on the point of resolving to live a different life, and I knew my benighted soul would need light to put me in the right path and keep me there. The way was now open. But I had never acknowledged my obligation to a supreme being. My prosperity and confidence in myself had kept the necessity of this from my thoughts. The necessary changes in my habits and purposes seemed awful, yet there was a feeling within me that said there was no more peace in the continuance of my present life.

I attended church the following Sabbath and tried to feel an unusual interest in the services. But it was going to be a desperate undertaking for me to ask to be identified with Christians. I frequently found myself enumerating the things I would have to do as well as those I would have to quit doing. But of all the requirements that confronted me, repentance was the most embarrassing. What dreadful conditions this would involve! Repent of all the sins I had committed! Regret everything I had ever done contrary to the decalogue! That would be to regret my prosperity, my success; for these were achieved through the transgression of the commandments against bearing false witness, covetousness, stealing and killing—I had killed unborn children.

Now, could I do what was necessary to satisfy my conscience? Could I apologize to those I had deceived and to those from which I had obtained wrongfully? I concluded that these things were impracticable. But I had been transgressing the other commandments, even serving other gods. I had worshipped the almighty dollar, and I had been in hand with that other god of mine, fame.



I had calculated that wealth would enable me to "climb the steeps where Fame's proud temple shineth afar."

My restless ambition was to awake some morning and find myself famous. There were two things that never failed to fill me with delight, seeing my name in print in some honorable connection, and receiving a sum of money. A man once came into my office and paid me a sixty dollar doctor bill in gold and silver. After he went out I laid the money on the table and gazed on it with ecstatic joy. I stood a few moments contemplating the power and possibilities of money. "You look pretty; you are the delight of my heart; what pleasures I have enjoyed through your influence; what wonderful influence is wielded through your power; you put men in position, you give them fame; I expect you to help me to secure a dwelling place in the temple of fame; what awful risks men run for your sake; they have burned midnight oil that they might gain possession of you."

I took up the pile of coins and poured them from one hand to the other to hear them jingle, and said, "How sweet is the sound of your voice. You have not only given me pleasure, but you have more than once gotten me out of trouble; I have used you many a time to cover up mistakes. O, money, do you realize your mighty power? You have destroyed nations and dethroned kings; you have made governors, senators and presidents; you have made friends of foes, and shut the mouths of enemies.."

I was under conviction of sin and struggling over a resolution to change my life. The decline in my ambition promised to make it easier to effect this change. I had arrived at an age when men are more capable of seeing life as it is and appreciating its realities. I was better prepared to relax my persistency in scheming for self-aggrandizement at the sacrifice of principal. I had begun to realize the shortness of life. The most of mine was behind me and I could see no profit in spending the remainder a-



the past. Mrs. Holley had enlightened me somewhat on this subject.

The first reform I made was to curb my jealousy and prejudice in connection with my professional work. I formed the habit of attending church as often as practicable, ceased the use, as a beverage, of intoxicating liquors and made an effort to abandon other evil habits; but I frankly admit that I was not yet a saint.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

LORETTA ELBRIDGE.

"Have you seen Loretta Elbridge lately?"

"Not to speak to her."

"How long has it been since you saw her?"

"I saw her day before yesterday."

"Were you close to her?"

"She was in a buggy with her father. They passed me on the street."

"They say her health is poor."

"Yes, Mrs. Elbridge told me Loretta was not feeling well."

"Did she say what was the matter with her?"

"She said she had some kind of stomach trouble."

"I'm sorry for Loretta."

The two women had met in the street car waiting room. It being at an hour when travel was slack, there were but few people in the room, thus giving opportunity for unhampered conversation. Mrs. Dolans manifested unusual interest in the subject of their remarks. But this was not strange, for Miss Elbridge was very popular and had many warm friends. She was useful to so many interests in the city that her inability to discharge her various duties was always noticed. Two years before this when she sustained painful injuries in a run-away accident, the anxious inquiries and expressions of sympathy from time to time by citizens generally, were enough to remind one of the assassination of a president.

"How long has it been since you were at Elbridge's?" Mrs. Dolans asked.

"I think about two weeks."

"How did Loretta look?"

"She didn't look as well as she usually does. She was not so cheerful."

"How did Mrs. Elbridge seem?"

"She was all right; but I could see that she was worrying about Loretta."

"Is Loretta under the doctor's care?"

"I think Dr. Myers has been prescribing for her."

"Do you think Loretta is not able to go to church and out in society? You know she wouldn't miss church and Sunday school for anything, if she could possibly help it."

"Then of course she is not able to be out," was Mrs. Bradley's curt answer. She then added, "I didn't know but that she was as regular in her attendance as usual."

"O, no," said Mrs. Dolans, "she hasn't been to church or Sunday school for four weeks. Are you acquainted with Fred Instep, the lawyer?"

"No, I'm not personally acquainted with him, but I have often heard of him—"

"Here's our car again." They had already missed one car. In a minute one of the great inventions of the nineteenth century was speeding them to their homes in North Des Moines.

Loretta Elbridge's sunny face was missed at many places where it had been accustomed to appear and cast its cheering rays. A nimble, stirring, sympathetic spirit, to which is added beauty and culture, is always at a premium; and this is why Miss Elbridge was always surfeited with social, literary and church duties; but nearly all gatherings now had to forego the sound of her musical voice and the inspiration of her face. Strangers who attended the Congregational church missed her welcoming handshake and charming smile; her Sabbath school class lost her valuable instruction and spirited encouragement and the Woman's club was no longer edified by her brilliant discus-



Mrs. Dolans called at the Elbridge residence the Monday following the waiting room conversation. After the preliminaries concerning the weather, apologies for delinquency in returning calls and some complimentary remarks about Mrs. Elbridge's new carpet, Mrs. Dolans said,

"I didn't see you at church yesterday."

"I was there, though," Mrs. Elbridge said.

"Were you? Well, our new church is so large and the attendance has increased so one can't see half the people."

"I enjoyed the sermon very much; what did you think of it?"

"I thought it was good, too," said Mrs. Dolans.

"The music, I thought, was unusually fine. The new organ certainly is a great improvement over the old one. I think the congregation should feel grateful to Mrs. Prudence for donating it. What do you think of the pastor's proposition to organize a male quartette for the morning service?"

Mrs. Dolans was paying no attention to Mrs. Elbridge's remarks. She was thinking of something else. "I think it's nice" she said.

"I suppose," said Mrs. Elbridge, the Des Moines people will have an opportunity next week to hear Mr. Ingersoll lecture."

"How did you folks go to church last Sunday, in your carriage or in the street car?" Mrs. Dolans asked.

"We went in the carriage. Have you ever heard Mr. Ingersoll?"

"No," Mrs. Dolans answered, absently and then said, "I don't believe I know the location of your pew since we've got into the new church."

"It is in the east section and third pew from the pillar of the gallery."

"Was Mr. Elbridge at church Sunday?"

"Yes, he was there."

"You are alone a good deal, aren't you, Mrs. Elbridge?"



"O, but the electric cars have shortened the distance so that is no excuse now."

"I suppose you enjoy your new house?"

"Very much indeed; but still, if it were to do over again, we would have it different."

"Of course; it wouldn't do to be satisfied."

"No, that isn't human."

"O, here's a new book. 'The Gad Fly.' You buy every new book that comes out, don't you?"

"No, not every one," said Mrs. Cromwell, "but we aim to get all we have time to read. How are Mr. Dolans and the children?"

"Very well, thank you. Your family are well, I suppose?"

"There are no complaints, I believe."

"That reminds me," said Mrs. Dolans, "of Loretta Elbridge; I called there this afternoon."

"Did you? How are they?"

"Mrs. Elbridge is well, but Loretta is not."

"It's been a month since I saw her last," said Mrs. Cromwell, "and she didn't look well then. How does she look now?"

"I didn't get a chance to see her face."

"She was at home, was she?"

"Yes, but—I—I thought they acted strangely. I inquired about Loretta. I'm sure she was upstairs, for I could hear some one up there, and I know the hired girl was down stairs all the time. I stayed longer than I intended to because I kept thinking Loretta would come down; but I got tired waiting and just as I was passing out I glanced down the hall and saw Loretta turn the other way and go into the dining room. She couldn't help seeing me."

"O, well, perhaps she wasn't feeling well enough to receive callers. What kind of a dress did she have on?"

"I was going to tell you; she had on a loose wrapper—I think it was a new one, too."



Both women were silent some moments. Mrs. Cromwell's eyes turned toward the window, looking into space, while the other seemed to be studying the figures on the carpet.

"I've known Miss Loretta Elbridge for a good many years," said Mrs. Dolans. "She's always been a good girl."

"And she's smart as a whip, too," said the other.

"Do you know Mr. Instep, a lawyer?" Mrs. Dolans asked.

"Fred Instep? Yes, I've known him for some time."

"What kind of a man is he?"

"Well, he's a fine looking man, —"

"O, I know how he looks. He's handsome enough, and a fine talker, but what kind of a reputation does he bear?"

"They say he is a very shrewd, far-seeing business man, and might be a first-class lawyer if he would let financial speculations alone and devote more of his energies to his profession. They say he's getting rich. Did Mrs. Elbridge say anything about Loretta?"

"Not till I asked her, and then all she said was that she had some kind of stomach trouble."

Both women smiled and there was nothing more said about Miss Elbridge. Mrs. Dolans went away little wiser than when she came.

On the day following Mrs. Cromwell received a call from Mrs. Ward, who lived next door to the Elbridge's, and it was not strange that she should be interested in her nearest neighbor. Soon after her arrival she said, "Have you seen Loretta Elbridge lately?"

"Not for quite awhile," was the answer.

"She's looking quite badly; that is, she looks sad and unhappy. She has lost that bright, cheerful expression that was always so conspicuous with her, and her manner is not so lively."

"I've heard a good deal," said Mrs. Cromwell, "about the remarkable change in her, but they say she hasn't lost much flesh."

"What is the matter with her, anyway?"

"I don't know. Her mother calls it dyspepsia, but she says sometimes she's afraid it's cancer of the stomach or bowels. I'll tell you what the hired girl told me—but don't you ever repeat it; I wouldn't have you to for anything. She says Loretta frequently gets sick at her stomach, and even vomits occasionally."

"Is that so?" said Mrs. Cromwell. "Did the girl say anything about a peculiar appetite?"

"No, I believe not."

"You ask her about that when you see her."

"All right; I will."

"But don't tell her that I said anything about it."

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### GOSSIPING.

One morning not long after the events related in the last chapter, the Elbridge family was astir much earlier than was their custom. Their neighbors who happened to look out from their bedroom windows wondered what was the occasion of the light in different rooms of the Elbridge residence at so early an hour. Mrs. Ward shook her husband and said, "Look over there, Papa; what do you suppose has happened at Mr. Elbridge's?"

Mrs. Martin, having been aroused by the cry of one of her children, looked out and said, "Say, George, do you know that Elbridge's house is all lighted up? There's a light in Loretta's room, too. What do you think it means!"

"O, lie down," said Mr. Martin, one-half asleep and the other half angry, "I'm not concerned about what my neighbors are doing this time o' night."

But Mrs. Martin couldn't sleep. She got up and went down stairs. Her eyes were constantly on the lighted windows of the house on the south. She even went out on to the lawn that she might the better be able to distinguish the persons in the lighted rooms. She was wondering. Was there any one there that looked like a doctor? She heard a rattling up the paved street, and approached as near one neighbor's front door as she dared to. But it was a two-second look. Stepping back and looking into a down stairs room, she saw Loretta stirring round as if getting ready to get up. This was a disappointment.

When two trunks were brought out to the hack, followed by Loretta Elbridge and her mother, the mystery was deep-



The following day Mr. Elbridge informed his inquisitive neighbors that his wife and daughter had gone out to Colorado for the benefit of the latter's health. But their acquaintances who happened not to have learned of their plans before their departure made all sorts of comments. Mrs. Elbridge and Loretta purchased railroad tickets for Denver, Colorado. A word was dropped in Mrs. Dolan's hearing that caused her to ask her husband, who is a commercial traveler, if he knew what kind of hospitals they had in Denver.

"I have incidentally heard of one or two of their hospitals," he said.

"Do you know," she asked, "whether they have a hospital exclusively for women?"

"I do not," was the answer.

Mrs. Dolans said to herself, "I'll go and see Mrs. Martin; I owe her a call anyhow; and if she doesn't know about the hospitals, perhaps she's had some word from Mrs. Elbridge and Loretta."

Her arrival at Mrs. Martins completed a trio of congenial souls. She found Mrs. Ward there. When she introduced the subject that just then lay next to her heart, Mrs. Martin said, "Well, Mrs. Dolans, this is a rather singular coincidence; we were discussing that very subject when you came in. I had commenced to tell Mrs. Ward that they have hospitals in a good many cities where women only are received; and," turning to Mrs. Ward, "they are conducted on a strictly confidential basis. The inmates are well cared for, and nothing is lacking in facilities for making them comfortable."

"Do you know," said Mrs. Dolans, "how long Mrs. Elbridge and Loretta intend to be gone?"

"I don't," replied Mrs. Ward.

"Were you ever in Denver, Mrs. Dolans?"

"I never have been."

"It is a beautiful city," said Mrs. Martin. And then

it must be delightful and romantic to live in such plain view of tall mountains on one side and wide, level plains on the other."

"Have you heard from Mrs. Elbridge and Loretta since they left?" Mrs. Dolans asked.

"Yes," said Mrs. Martin, Mr. Elbridge told me yesterday that he had received a telegram yesterday morning. They were in Denver."

"Well," said Mrs. Dolans, "I hope Loretta will get rid of her stomach trouble all right."

Mrs. Martin pressed her lips together Mrs. Ward turned her head and looked out at the window, and Mrs. Dolans stepped to the other side of the room and said, "Mrs. Martin, how long have you had this picture?"

Just at this moment three women's eyes met and they burst into unwilling laughter; Mrs. Ward dashed across the room, saying, "I think I hear my baby crying; I must go—good-by. Come and see me, both of you."

## CHAPTER XLIX.

### SELFISH PENITENCE.

After my attempt at reform I became—as I thought—the most unhappy creature on earth. I had resolved to become a Christian, but my experience so far only enabled me to understand why men steeped in sin are so apt to lose faith in the promises of Christianity when they become penitent. I had expected that when I should resolve to abandon my evil ways and ask forgiveness for my sins, I should at once experience a happy change in my disposition and desires—that the change would come as suddenly and be as radical as the relief after the extraction of a tooth. But I was disappointed. My penitence only made me miserable. It had opened my eyes to the awful corruption that pervaded my life. I wondered why I had not seen it before; but it is plain now that my ambition, prosperity and social standing had kept me blind to my own faults. I did not want to see them, for it was through evil deeds that I had secured what I called success in life.

One alteration my penitence had brought about was, it caused my mind to be occupied in enumerating and grieving over my transgressions instead of concocting plans for self-aggrandizement. Since my penitence I have frequently agonized over the fear that I have committed the unpardonable sin—and all the others, too. The whole decalogue lay before me, broken into fragments. I was many times a murderer; the blood of many stricken with disease, as well as some that had never seen the light of day, was on my hands. And after reading my worthy competitor, Dr. Vertebra's article on "Responsibility in Suicide," I realized that I had frequently attempted that most cowardly of all mur-



#### 4. MOTHER GUARANTEE

UPON THE ASSASSINATION OF LINCOLN. THE ASSASSIN AND HIS  
FOLLOWERS WERE ALL ARRESTED. HE WAS TAKEN TO  
THE FORT MONROE AND THE FORT MONROE AND THE FORT MONROE  
AND THE FORT MONROE AND THE FORT MONROE AND THE FORT MONROE

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

He is a very serious person. There was a serious expression in his expression that I thought was truly serious.

"I know," she answered. "You know the sunlight gives  
them life and love."

1-25-54

So does the light of truth and the Holy Spirit shine into the sore, guilty conscience. Penitence shines the light of God's word on to the dark deeds of the

sinner. So, Doctor, you should feel encouraged, for your heart is going through the process of purification; but it stings while the change is going on. You must remember that conscience is the voice of God; and when it comes in the way of reproof it hurts, but its approval gives comfort."

I was somewhat surprised, yet pleased at the frank, unreserved manner in which Mrs. Holley talked to me. It was for my good but a little humiliating. When I told her how I suffered from failure to carry out my plans and attain the object of my life's ambition in the way of great fame and wealth, she said, "Instead of complaining, you ought to rejoice and thank God that He did not cut the thread of your life in your unredeemed state."

I concluded that for a woman so mild and tender hearted to be so bold in reproving and advising a man of my age and standing, she must be strengthened and guided by supreme power.

"But," said I, "I enjoyed life so much better during my prosperous days, when everything seemed to be coming my way and I thought nothing of religion and eternity, and why should I be so miserable now that I am trying to be a better man?"

"But," my friend replied, "did you feel that silent approbation in your heart which is so essential to sweet contentment?"

"O, I always had a kind of distant feeling that finally I would change my ways and become a Christian."

"Then you realize that you were living in violation of Heaven's laws and that a change was necessary to your salvation?"

I had to admit that it was so.

"But," she resumed, "you intended to choose your own time for making the change?"

"I expected," said I, "sometime to be ready to make the change."

"And you expected to choose your own time to die, too?"  
I made no answer to this.

"It is just as unsafe," she said, "for a person to depend on choosing his own time for conversion, as it is for him to calculate to live to a certain time. No one who is living a worldly life ever gets ready to become converted. As to your present unhappiness, it ought not to discourage you. There is no law, natural or divine, but has a penalty attached, and there must be expiation and atonement for every transgression. If you bruise a growing vegetable or deprive it of proper nourishment, imperfect fruit will be the penalty; if you lacerate your flesh, pain will follow, and when a divine law is violated, either painful remorse or something worse will be the unavoidable penalty. No one who lives a sinful life can hope to repent, be forgiven and enter into eternal peace without experiencing more or less suffering. Just as well expect to have a limb broken without inconvenience. If circumstances are such that the sinner doesn't experience punishment during his earthly life he will in eternity.

I hope, Doctor, that you will accept your present discomfort as a preparation for eternal happiness."

Mrs. Holley's strong, positive words actually made me shudder, yet I accepted them as coming from a true friend.

"Mrs. Holley, it seems strange that when I, in accordance with your advice, went to searching the Scriptures after our conversation some time ago, I found so many passages that made me feel miserable and discouraged."

"Perhaps," she answered, "those passages were just the ones to make you realize your condition and needs. Take your Bible at the first opportunity and try it again. Search with a prayerful heart. The result may be different next time."

That night when I opened the Bible this was the first verse I read: "His mischief shall return upon his own



head, and his violent dealing shall come down on his own pate."

In one sense this was a great satisfaction to me; it showed that my experience was simply a fulfillment of God's plan, yet it was disagreeably humiliating to be reminded in this way of my mischief and violent dealings.

I sat awhile unconsciously turning the leaves of the book, and when I stopped my eyes dropped on the following:

"Behold, happy is the man whom the Lord correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty."

This afforded me great relief. I was getting some light. I continued to search, and immediately found this verse: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant."

This was pleasing. I accepted it as a promise of more light. Mrs. Holley had told me that if I would admit the light of the Holy Spirit into my soul it would help me to understand God's law.

From this time on I read the Bible a good deal and attended church with more interest than ever before, and if I may be allowed to judge, lived a more righteous life and felt that I was growing into a good Christian.

## CHAPTER L.

### MISS ELBRIDGE'S RETURN.

Every woman that knew Loretta Elbridge was anxious to see her immediately after her return from Colorado. They wanted to know how she looked. Nor was this curiosity confined to her own sex; men halted on the street and gazed as the Elbridge carriage rolled along from the railroad station in the direction of their beautiful residence in North Des Moines. Mr. Elbridge evidently had told some of his neighbors which train he expected his wife and daughter to come on. The news traveled post haste.

From the time the train was due until the Elbridge family landed at the doorsteps of their home, one or more pair of eyes might have been seen peering from the windows or doors of every house in the neighborhood, eager to catch a glimpse of the returning neighbors. But nothing satisfactory was learned from this view. A woman stuck her head out and said to one across the alley, "I hope she left her stomach trouble in Colorado." Within the next two or three days nearly every woman who was acquainted with the Elbridges called on other acquaintances of the family for the purpose of finding some one who had seen Loretta; each one being afraid of appearing intrusive by calling at the Elbridge home too soon after their return.

During the first week Mrs. Albert Bruce was the only woman that called. She was about the only one who had not participated in the discussion of the state of Loretta's health.

After it was known that she had seen Loretta her doorbell was kept hot for two or three days. To every inquiry

her answer was brief; something like this: "Miss Elbridge's health is about the same as it was before she went away."

To one or two, however, she said, "I don't believe any doctor she has consulted knows what is the matter with her."

One woman introduced the subject this way: "Well, how's the old maid across the way?"

"Whom do you mean, please?" said Mrs. Bruce.

"Why, the one that has the stomach trouble."

"If you mean my friend, Miss Loretta Elbridge, she is not at all well. No better than when she went away."

Mrs. Bruce looked so indignant that her caller asked no more questions. This was the first time any one had applied the epithet to Loretta Elbridge.

Finally a number of the friends of the Elbridge family called on them, and they all reported that Loretta still looked melancholy and downcast. Those who talked with her said her low-spirited manner excited their utmost sympathy; yet many unkind remarks were made about the unfortunate young woman. Mrs. Dolans met another woman on the street and this was her salutation:

"Ah, ha!" with a bobbing of the head, "it seems that Colorado isn't a good place to get rid of stomach troubles."

Loretta Elbridge had not received an invitation to a social function for several weeks before she went away. Miss Prudle, a popular high school teacher and for a number of years a special friend of Loretta's said to Miss Converse, president of the Shakespeare Club, "I'm mortified at Loretta Elbridge. How are we to know whom to have faith in?"

"I'm more than mortified, I'm petrified," said Miss Converse. "I don't pity her one bit. Do you know Fred In-step, the lawyer?"

"Yes, I've met him a number of times."

"What kind of a man is he?"



"He's a very handsome man; and real bright and interesting. He's wealthy, too; and you know money covers up a multitude of faults. It's too bad."

Mrs. Martin called on Mrs. Dolans, and of course one of the first topics was the young lady who had recently depreciated so much in the affections of her friends and admirers.

"Why," said Mrs. Martin, do you know that Mrs. Elbridge still speaks of Loretta's stomach trouble, and also about her bloating?"

"I suppose," said Mrs. Dolans, "you see Loretta frequently?"

"Not very often; but their hired girl comes over to see mine every day, and I hear a good deal through her. She says Loretta hasn't been sick at her stomach for quite awhile."

"But she still has stomach trouble?"

Mrs. Martin went on, "The girl said she overheard Loretta tell her mother that she had lost her interest in nearly everything and if she was not going to get rid of her trouble she didn't care how soon the good Lord took her away."

"It's too bad," said Mrs. Dolans, "one can't help pitying the poor girl, after all;—do you suppose her mother knows what's the matter with her?"

"Of course she does."

After a long pause, Mrs. Dolans exclaimed, "Well, such is life?"

## CHAPTER LI.

### VERY UNHAPPY.

There is one disease which brings more disaster and unhappiness to man than any other he is heir to. It is generally complicated with another disorder—its twin brother, jealousy. I have reference to envy. As justification for calling it a disease, I refer to Albert Bruce's lecture on the "New Family." This complication of disorders constantly goes stalking up and down the land, watching for an opportunity to capture and take possession of weak minds. It is a sporadic disease. The mediums through which it enters the system are words and acts. It has a peculiar effect on its victims. It is frequently fatal, occasionally resulting in suicide. It sometimes affects a whole community and changes the aspect of society. The Petville syndicate owed its existence and long life to this malady. One of its effects is to drive Christianity out of the soul. I have always been subject to this ailment. It attacked me several times in my youth; but the hardest and most damaging spell I ever had was a few weeks after I had begun to think about a better life and become a good Christian. This particular attack came in a peculiar way; it is claimed by medical men that smallpox and other diseases are sometimes conveyed to persons through the mails, but this awful disease actually came to me by telegraph. While sitting in the station waiting for a train on which I expected some friends, I was doing a little telegraph eavesdropping. By occasionally practicing a little for amusement and pastime since quitting my former trade, I could still "receive" by sound. I caught this dispatch: "Des Moines, September fifth, 1901 Dr

Vertebra: Come on next train to see Loretta. Please answer. J. C. Elbridge."

From the instant I spelled out the last word the fever of envy and jealousy came on apace. In a little while I was suffering from congestion of the brain.

Here was another call from a prominent family in the Capital City for the professional services of the man whom I had belittled and treated with contempt more than any other physician that ever undertook to compete with me. I turned sick and pale. It seemed that the tables were turned. Dr. Vertebra was coming up and I was going down.

Finally my blood began to circulate a little faster and I flew into a rage, forgot my religious promises and cursed Providence. I had become a slave to ambition, envy and jealousy. I sat down in my office and went to recounting the victories, professional, social and political, that Dr. Vertebra had won over me within the last year or so; but this only intensified my agony. O, what a feeling I had against this man! This quotation came into my mind: "Adronicus, would thou were shipped to hell, rather than rob me of the people's hearts." Nor was my anguish mollified by the following remarks from Jo Blaggart when I met him an hour later on the street: "I heard that Doc Vertebra was called to Des Moines to see a patient."

"Yes; well," said I, "I hope it will do him and the patient both good."

"It seems," said Jo, "that Doc's prosperin' purty well now. You didn't expect him to succeed here, did you? At times you tried mighty hard for a good many years to prevent it."

"I didn't do any more against him than you did."

"The hell you didn't! You know damned well that you done every thing under heavens that you could think of to turn people against him; but I didn't do very much."



"O, come, now, Jo; you know you and your wife were always opposing Dr. Vertebra."

"Well, you can't kick for what we done was to befriend you and your wife."

Jo Blaggar, as well as many other former enemies of Dr. Vertebra, were now courting his friendship, since they saw that he had backbone enough to stand up under their well planned opposition, and had acquired more influence in connection with the vital interests of the town than they had.

Jo had a view to the doctor's favors and help in realizing his political ambition. He hoped the doctor had forgotten or at least forgiven the blunt, vulgar slurs and insinuations he had heaped on him while he was yet crippled through adversity.

In fact Mr. Verbosego and all the rest of the monopoly syndicate who had been so jealous of Dr. Vertebra's progressive spirit and ideas, were forced to acknowledge that these very ideas had greatly improved the town generally, and benefitted them individually, and they were now trying to deny that they had ever opposed him.

I was feeling very unhappy; but finally I concluded that it was largely on account of my failure to control myself. I actually worried over my devilish disposition. The religion which I thought had sprouted in my soul was doing me no good. I decided to go and see that saintly old lady whose counsel had encouraged me somewhat before, and make a frank statement of my troubles to her. I had the impression that she was in closer communion with the Divine Spirit than any other person I knew; therefore she would understand the laws that govern our spiritual natures.

"Mrs. Holley," I said, after the subject had been broached, do any others have the same experience I do in trying to be a Christian?"

"People have various dispositions," she began, "and their circumstances and surroundings are different, &

must not be surprised if the experiences of life affect different individuals in different ways. What is the peculiarity of you experience in the matter you speak of?"

"Well," I said, "I might mention several things. It seems impossible for me to enter into the devotional part of the Christian life. And then I can't get rid of my old impulses and inclinations, which I know do not belong to a Christian."

For instance, I can't forgive my enemies, let alone loving them. Circumstances have arisen lately that aroused my envy and jealousy in a more bitter form, it seems, than ever before."

"Doctor," said Mrs. Holley, "don't you know that envy and jealousy are not manly traits? When you envy a man you are ignorantly and unwillingly praising him; if you are jealous of another's attainments, it is proof that you are dissatisfied with your own. It is almost impossible to envy a person without exerting an influence calculated to do him an injustice. Life is too short to spend any part of it making others unhappy. Our sojourn here is intended as a preparation for the real life beyond the tomb."

"Mrs. Holley," I said, "I am compelled to endorse your ideas, but don't Christians find it difficult to live up to their professions so long as they see a majority of church members showing no proofs in their daily walks of being any better than outsiders? I know it would for me."

"Never mind what others do. Find out your own duty, and perform it faithfully."

I was thinking of myself when I asked, "Don't you think the great struggle to make money stands in the way of practicing Christianity more than anything else?"

"It evidently does with a great many, but those persons would show truer and more sensible business tact if, instead of gathering filthy lucre, they would devote more of their time and energies to the accumulation of charity, brotherly love, knowledge and truth—currency that is taken

at the gates of heaven. The greatest stumbling block in Christian progress is that so many people try to receive Christ into their hearts and still retain the old rubbish that is antagonistic to Christianity.

Envy, falsehood, covetousness, profanity, licentiousness, dishonesty, cannot dwell in the same heart with Christ. Doctor, if you will recognize God's goodness to you and no longer reject the overtures of His mercy you will have no more trouble with this question."



## CHAPTER LII.

### THE SOLUTION.

There were a few of the Elbridges' neighbors who knew Dr. Vertebra by sight, and when they saw him alight from the street car with a medical case in his hand, and enter the house, their minds became very busy surmising his errand. Mr. and Mrs. Elbridge had been seen about the premises a short time before, apparently in good health, therefore the conclusion was that the doctor was making a professional visit to Loretta. And, as justification of their conjectures, Miss Elbridge had not been seen for twenty-four hours. The rapidity with which this bit of news was spread would indicate that electricity had been employed. Many little private conferences were at once held by those who had interested themselves in the condition of Miss Elbridge's health. All kinds of questions were asked and suggestions made. Why did they call a non-resident physician? Have any of the neighbor women been called in?

Mrs. Cromwell's telephone rang:

"Hello!"

"Is that Mrs. Cromwell?"

"Yes, that's my name; what's wanted?"

"I just thought I'd call you up and see how you looked."

"O, it's you, Mrs. Dolans, is it? Well, what do you think of me?"

"O, you look fine today—but then this may be one of those cases in which distance lends enchantment to the view—ha! ha!"

"Allow me to compliment you on your looks at this distance, too. How are all the other Dolanses?"

"They are all away but me and the baby. Say, Dr. Ver-tebra, of Petville, came up to Elbridge's about an hour ago, and he's there yet; he had a medical case with him."

"Is that so? What't the trouble at E.'s?"

"I'm sure I don't know. I saw Mr. and Mrs. E. around looking as well as ever a little while before the doctor came."

"Then it must be some one else that's sick. Can't you come up this afternoon?"

"Perhaps I can."

"Try and find out how they are at E.'s before you come."

"All right."

"Well, that's all; goodbye."

Mrs. Martin, seeing Elbridge's servant girl in the back yard, said to her own servant girl, "Tell Maggie to come over here as soon as she can—but don't tell her that I told you to."

In half an hour, the desired girl was in Mrs. Martin's kitchen.

"Who is that man at Elbridge's?" Mrs. Martin asked.

"Why, it's Doctor ————— somebody; Oi've forgotten his name."

"Is there anyone sick over there?"

"Yes, ma'am; they called him to see Miss Loretta."

"What's the matter with her?"

"Sure an' Oi don't know. It must be something bad, fer he shtays a deal of a while."

"Do you hear any unusual sound in Loretta's room?"

"Sure an' it's in the kitchen and about my work that Oi am, an' it's little attintion Oi pays to what's goin' on up stairs."

"Do they seem to think Loretta is very bad off?"

"She can't be very dangerous, fer the doctor's down stairs all the time; an' Oi'm sure her father haint been up

to see her at all. Oi heard Mrs. Elbridge tell the doctor that Loretta had a severe pain in her stomach."

"Was Loretta up and around this morning before the doctor came?"

"Yes, jist the same as usual—" the girl looked out at the window and said, "Oi guess the Missus wants me."

As she started Mrs. Martin said, "You come over here again, won't you, as soon as the doctor leaves? But don't tell Mrs. Elbridge or anyone else that I asked you to."

Mrs. Dolans, seeing Mrs. Bruce come out of the Elbridge residence and go home, became a little bit jealous. She said to herself, "Why haven't I as much right to go over to Elbridge's as Mrs. Bruce has? She is in possession of information that I would give a good deal to have just now; but," shaking her head disdainfully, "I couldn't have the cheek to go without an invitation."

She remembered that she owed Mrs. Bruce a call and decided that courtesy demanded immediate payment of the debt. She refrained from doing her usual portion of the talking for the purpose of giving Mrs. Bruce an opportunity to refer to her visit across the street, but the latter did not seem very communicative. The conversation was slow and irregular, but Mrs. Dolans became very anxious.

"Have you heard to-day how Miss Elbridge is?"

"I was over there this afternoon," was the answer.

"How is she?"

"Well," said Mrs. Bruce, hesitatingly, "I don't know that I am really able to say. Dr. Vertebra has been there twice to-day. He's there now."

Mrs. Dolans, after making all the opening possible for Mrs. Bruce to let out any secret she might be in possession of, became desperate and said, "I suppose to-day will end the stomach trouble over at Elbridge's."

"Yes," said Mrs. Bruce, with a calm smile, "I suppose it will."

This brief answer was only an aggravation to the in-



quirer. Why couldn't Mrs. Bruce be liberal and give some relief. It certainly was within her power. But she had never gratified any of the curious women by discussing Miss Elbridge's misfortune, yet her conduct and language were not such as to enable them to accuse her of trying to shield the young woman. Mrs. Dolans, determined not to be baffled, asked in vigorous tones, "What is the matter with Miss Elbridge, anyhow?"

Mrs. Bruce laughed out and said, in a manner which her charming dignity was capable of, and that forbade any cross-questioning, "Judging from what I heard Dr. Ver-tebra say, it will positively be known in an hour or so."

Mrs. Dolans went home as soon after this as she could without making it conclusive that the information she sought was her sole errand at Mrs. Bruce's. And she lost no time in conveying the news to her acquaintances. There were an unusual number of calls made that afternoon between the acquaintances of the Elbridge family, and these calls brought out a profusion of sentiment on the subjects of morality and chastity. Mrs. Brown said to Mrs. Jones, "It's awful! I almost feel as if I never can get over this shock."

Miss Johnson said to Miss Turner, "I suppose Miss Jackson and some others will now feel more than ever justified in not inviting Miss Elbridge to their receptions."

The telephone wires in some of the residence districts of the city were kept hotter than usual that afternoon conveying semi-cipher messages.

There was a concentration of female eyes and thoughts on the Elbridge residence. Not long after the hour had expired, Mrs. Elbridge, seeing Mrs. Ward in her back yard, said to her, in a clear, cheerful voice, come over as soon as convenient and I will show you what has been causing Loretta so much trouble."

"All right," said Mrs. Ward, "I will."

Mrs. Elbridge, discovering that Mrs. Martin, who was at her back door, overheard her, said, "You come, too."

The two women met at Mrs. Ward's house, and as they started out from the front door, they saw Mrs. Dolans, and knowing it would do her soul good, they asked her to join them. The trio started on their interesting errand with hearts full of curious expectancy, tinged with embarrassment.

"Well," said Mrs. Ward, "I suppose they just thought they would put on a bold front and make the best of it."

"Yes, and it's better to do that way," said Mrs. Dolans, "than to show their shame and humiliation."

"Don't you pity Mrs. Elbridge?" said Mrs. Martin.

"Yes," said Mrs. Dolans, "I pity her more than I do Loretta. Do you know I always thought there was a kind of sly boldness in that girl's conduct that made me a little suspicious?"

"I never would have mentioned it, but that's just the way I've felt, too," said Mrs. Ward; "she always had the appearance of a hypocrite."

"How do you think Fred Instep will feel when he hears the news?" said Mrs. Dolans.

As the three women stepped on to the porch, with hearts beating more unsteady than usual, with a confused expression of mirthful mischief, Mrs. Martin said, "Hark! I thought I heard a tiny wail."

"Be careful," Mrs. Ward whispered, knitting her brow and giving Mrs. Martin a nudge with her elbow, "they'll hear you."

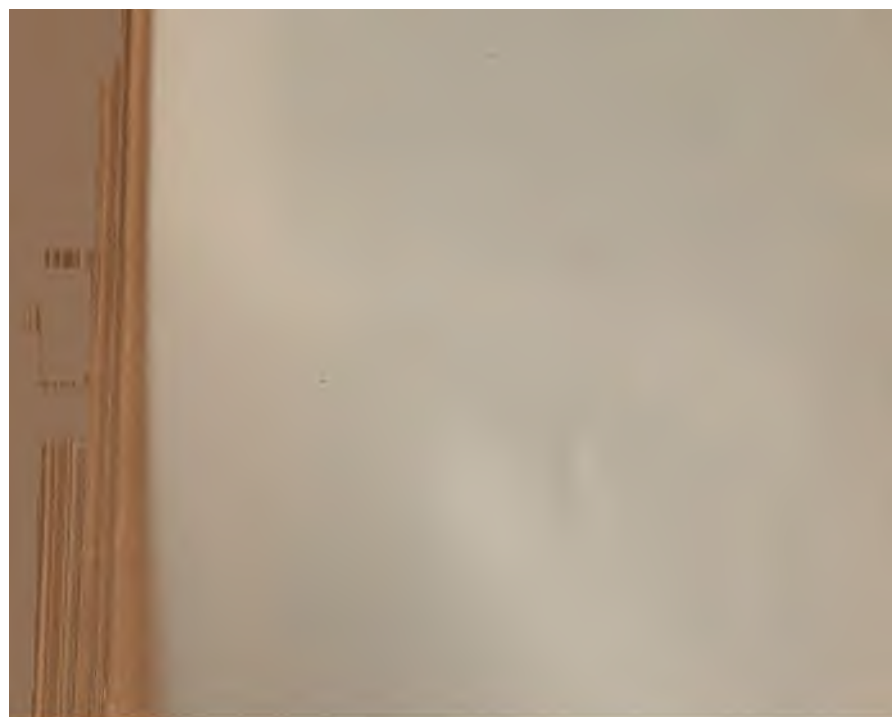
As they heard some one coming to answer the doorbell, Mrs. Martin said to Mrs. Dolans, "You've got to go first!"

Mrs. Elbridge's pleasant smile and cheerful, lively manner, so unexpected, almost shocked her visitors. They were conducted to an upstairs room. Mrs. Elbridge said, with a smile peering through a blush, "there it is, ladies,"



"HARK! I THOUGHT I HEARD A TINY WAIL."





improving a little more twenty-six and a half feet long in a vast bowl. Dissecting these magnificent beings rushed up into the hall with the same old and the same old story for a while longer. It was a solemn scene, but nothing terrible and sad as I have before.

"Now, I think you are the doctor," said the old man, "what is the name of it?"

"After I found the bones, I was surprised enough to say, 'Well, what is the name of it?' and I was the last to know."

"What is the name of it?" said the old man.

"The bones of the doctor," said the old man, "and the bones of the doctor, I think, are the bones of the doctor."

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"Well," said Mrs. Martin, "Thank the Lord, I am not a doctor."

very much about Loretta Elbridge; but I presume there are women in this town that can never look her in the face again."

"This explains Mrs. Bruce's actions, don't it?" said Mrs. Dolans.

These women were too provoked to talk and they separated for their respective homes.



## CHAPTER LIII.

### REFLECTIONS.

My last interview with Mrs. Holley was very encouraging. It afforded some relief to my troubled soul. It enabled me to see, clearer than ever, the folly of my career, and to understand my duty in the future; it was leading me up to more exalted ideas of life. I resolved to live a less selfish life, and was getting pretty well reconciled to my new plans, feeling good over the victory I was winning over worldly ambitions and desires. In one sense it seemed that I was making a great sacrifice, yet I knew it was right, and hoped that no temptation would present itself that I would not have the moral courage to resist.

While these healthy thoughts were cheering and consoling me, Fred Instep, my old friend, stepped into my office. We greeted each other as only old acquaintances can. Reminiscences of our boyhood days were briefly recalled. Fred was quite talkative. His conversation, interspersed with dashes of wit and humor, entertained me for a few moments in a way that I had not enjoyed for many a day; but his manner soon showed that he was on business. He seemed anxious and a little embarrassed. I wondered if his fertile brain had not worked up a scheme for trading me out of some kind of property, or was it one of those numerous cases of illegitimate indulgence which put a fat fee in the doctor's pocket. Fred referred, apparently in an incidental way, to services he had rendered me away back in Pennsylvania; then, after some remarks on matters of more recent date, he said,

"Doctor, you and I have always been good friends, and now I want to ask a favor of you."

"Well," Fred said I "I certainly wouldn't refuse you my love, but I could possibly confer."

I recalled the different times in our early days that I had addressed those same words to him.

"What is it, Fred?" I asked.

"I have an surprise to hand," he began. "that has in it a little little sum of money, and with the assistance you could render in the case I will be sure to carry it through successfully." "I know Mrs. Brady, a former resident of your town."

"Yes, I do," I said.

"She consulted me a year or so ago, didn't she?"

"Yes, she did."

"I am certain she did," Fred's eyes brightened. "Now, I am going to tell you because she consulted you about your health, and she told me that she asked five hundred dollars and she was really five hundred to you. Mrs. Brady, as you do not know, married a wealthy man in Des Moines, but she was not to like him, and he wants to get rid of her and marry another woman. I am his attorney, and he is going to sue for his own, but we don't think his wife deserves any money, and if your testimony is of a certain character, we will have no difficulty in preventing her from getting it."

That "five hundred dollars for you" had a very seductive sound, but on reflection I concluded to resist the temptation. I could not think of committing a serious crime so soon after my good resolutions. But it required some courage to say, "No, Fred, I could not swear as you want me to without committing perjury and also besmirching an innocent woman's character, and I can't do that, for I have resolved to lead a better life. Recent experiences have convinced me that a man cannot afford to get money at the sacrifice of principle."

"Now, see here, Doc, you don't want to let a good thing

slip through your fingers. I'll give you five hundred dollars of my fee if you will help me in this business."

Fred looked me square in the face for awhile and then went on: "You've entered into deals more questionable than this with many a person, and now I hope you won't draw the line at me. Come, five hundred dollars is a handsome consideration for one day's work."

This was a great temptation to a man who had always made money his god—had allowed the almighty dollar to command his will, and relied on wealth to bring him honor and friends. And then, my resources were gradually decreasing; my friends were one by one coming to admit that the pillars of my reputation were rotten and rapidly giving way; while my extravagant wife and profligate son were consuming my income as fast as it came.

I finally yielded to Fred's temptation and testified as he asked me to do in the divorce trial. Cupidity conquered my good resolution and ever since my mind has been alternating between hope and despair, the latter generally holding the ascendancy. It seems that whenever hope predominates and then loses, my prospects for a better life diminish.

Fred gained the lawsuit and received the great fee he expected, but did not enjoy it long; a radical change in his heart and life made it impossible. Certain influences opened his eyes to the folly of his ways, and he became an earnest, consistent Christian. His conduct after his conversion made it evident to the most captious observer that he was sincere. He experienced a season of mourning that was heartrending and exhibited a degree of courage that is seldom witnessed. He not only confessed his sins, but made restitution so far as it lay in his power to do so. Every person whom he had wronged in a material way was requested, if he could find him, to present his claim for damages, and all such were reimbursed with interest. This left Fred comparatively a poor man, but he says that he



enjoys his present humble possessions much better than he did his larger fortune. But he laments the fact that there is one thing he cannot restore, and that is Mrs. Brady's and that Pennsylvania girl's good names. He says that in all his other transactions he only wronged people out of their earthly possessions. Wehn he told me this not long ago, I was painfully reminded of the fact that, through my whole life I had bartered extensively in reputations and good names.

Fred Instep says he is enjoying a rather happy life; I wish I were. A principle source of my unhappiness is the uncontrollable habit of taking a retrospective view of my life. Before a worldly minded man reaches the meridian of life the past is not apt to trouble him much. Hope keeps up his spirit, his mind is occupied with prospective attainments, and he feels that there is time yet to correct mistakes; but when he is nearing the sunset there is little to look forward to, and if the past has much in it to deprecate and little to commend, existence becomes a burden rather than a pleasure.

Sometimes I wonder why I should be so dissatisfied and uncomfortable when it would appear from externals that I am in a position to be an unusually comfortable man; but it is only the whirligig of time bringing its revenge. It seems that I have no control over my mind. It is almost constantly rambling from one disagreeable thought to another. At one time I brood over the injuries I have done others financially and socially; at another I worry over deaths I have caused through ignorance and criminal carelessness. (Dr. Starr, my first preceptor, often spoke of the grave responsibilities of our profession; there certainly has been more *grave* than responsibility in my practice;) then I will become distracted on account of failing to realize my ambition for fame, honor and wealth; and again it pains me to recall my childhood and think how it might have been; now and then I agonize over the awful threat-

ening future. These thoughts form a horrible group in my mind. I always worry about my failure to vanquish Dr. Vertebra; I had fought several other competitors, always coming out victorious, but in this man of backbone I met my Waterloo.

How mortifying to be beaten by one whom we have ridiculed, belittled and treated with contempt! Justice came to Dr. Vertebra, but with lagging steps. You may deceive the people for a long time but finally the light will be thrown on and things will be seen in their true colors.

Not only are the laity at the mercy of the medical profession, but the physician who is established in practice holds the reputation and prosperity of a new competitor in his hands for an extended length of time. Then taking this together with other assertions in this story, the question may be asked, have the people any way of judging the comparative qualifications of the different members of the profession? Yes, they have; the first reliable guide is the physician's true standing with the profession. He cannot deceive them very much. I use the phrase true standing, because some doctors acquire unmerited superior reputations, but on account of their standing in the community, their fellows have not the courage to refuse to endorse them before the laity. Another means of discriminating in this matter is, the physician who acquires an undeserved reputation is constantly doing something to attract attention and advertise his ability. A physician may advertise extensively without having to pay for printer's ink.

Well, I must get back to my worry. I have nursed my troubles so much in the last two years it seems that I don't want to let them get cold. When one source of grief drops from my mind I naturally take up another. I seem to be a little better contented with thoughts that make me unhappy. For awhile I blamed religion for my unhappiness, inasmuch as it was not until I began to think seriously

on the subject that I experienced any really distressing and continued mental disturbance. I told Mrs. Holley that I thought it was a queer kind of religion that made a man miserable. Her answer was,

"You have a sure remedy in true penitence and prayer."

"But," said I, "I have prayed, but the more I think about my sins the more miserable I become, and I almost conclude that I have committed the unpardonable sin."

To this she said, "I am afraid, Doctor, the trouble with you is, as with others I have known, that you have not forgiven yourself. You are afraid you will carry your sins to heaven with you; but remember that the Holy Spirit will give you a body and soul free from impure and disagreeable thoughts."

These remarks afforded me relief for awhile, but I lapsed into my former way of feeling.

One source of trouble is my horrible dreams. Not long ago I dreamed I went to heaven—but it was only after an excruciating examination in the ante-room. One of the popular topics of conversation with the inmates was the enterprises and movements on earth for the improvement of the human race and the advancement of truth and justice. Each would express his joy and gratification over the work he had done along these lines. These recollections afforded the highest degree of happiness, but I could not recall a single thing that my hand or heart had ever engaged in for the benefit of man or the advancement of God's kingdom on earth. All that I had ever done pointed to self-aggrandizement. I concluded that I would have been just as happy in the other place.

In one of my dreams I saw my own heart dissected. It seemed to be formed of layers, like an onion. Each layer was labelled, and as they were separated I read on the outside, selfishness; on the second layer, ambition; third, deception; fourth covetousness; fifth, egotism; sixth, vanity; seventh, fraud; eighth, lust; ninth, jealousy; tenth, malice.



After the dissecting was completed, my first impulse was to watch for an opportunity to exchange hearts with some one of my competitors whom I had tried to disparage.

It will be seen that I have made a success in life, as success goes with the world. I acquired a comfortable little fortune and gained a fair reputation and some honor among my neighbors, but if any medical student, or young physician is tempted to follow my course or adopt my methods with a view to similar results, let me warn him that it will not pay, for there is a nemesis in the wake of every evil doer that finally brings him to retributive justice. I have acknowledged my mistake, and tried to reform and bring peace to my soul, but have not succeeded; in fact, my unhappiness is on the increase and I have grave fears for the end.

**THE END.**

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